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THE INDEPENDENT

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Election '97
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How green is your party?

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A sleeping giant stirred in the election campaign yesterday. Environmental spokesmen from the three main parties met to debate green issues - the first time they have ever done so outside the House of Commons.

Swampy-style green activists may have no faith and much contempt for the conventional political process, but yesterday's fierce exchanges - organised by Friends of the Earth - demonstrated at least that the main parties feel they cannot ignore protection of the environment.

The passionate argument contrasted with the rest of yesterday's campaigning, which dwelt on issues such as Labour's relations with the unions and an arcane debate on whether a judge would rule on disputes over recognition of trade unions.

The green debate was won convincingly by the Liberal Democrats, who have radical plans for tax reform. But Labour's environmental protection spokesman, Michael Meacher,

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called their programme "a list of dreams from a party that will never have to try to put those dreams into effect".

The Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, promised that under the Conservatives the duty on petrol would keep on rising year by year, at 5 per cent annually, to encourage fuel-efficient, less polluting cars. And he said the Tory manifesto would pledge other green budgetary reforms.

Mr Meacher, in typically careful Labour-speak, would make no commitment on fuel duties, saying that was a matter for a Labour Chancellor. But the Liberal Democrats have the most punitive policy on petrol prices. Their spokesman, Matthew Taylor, said not only



Politicians and the environment

CONSERVATIVES
No specific commitments from John Gummer prior to the manifesto launch. Policies launched in Government to be continued - on financial incentives and charges to protect the environment, halting out-of-town development, protecting wildlife in partnership with voluntary groups, ending overfishing of the North Sea and cutting carbon dioxide emissions.

LABOUR
Carbon dioxide emissions to be cut by 20 per cent through funding energy conservation schemes in housing, boosting non-polluting renewable energy sources and introducing "an integrated public transport strategy". More prosecutions of companies by the Government's Environment Agency and Drinking Water Inspectorate.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
A greenfield development tax, discouraging development in the countryside or urban green sites. Funds raised would be used to cut business rates. Scrapping the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. A carbon tax on fossil fuels with revenues used to cut VAT and employers' NI contributions.

Rolling countryside in the Garden of England. The parties yesterday put green issues back on the agenda
Photograph: Brian Hemm

would fuel duties carry on rising by 5 per cent a year - the Government's existing ecotax commitment - but there would be an additional 4p tax on a litre of petrol.

This is needed to fund the Liberal Democrat plans to slash the cost of a tax disc for all cars with engines under 1600cc by 93 per cent, from £145 to £10, intended to encourage a shift to cars which use less petrol and produce fewer climate-changing

greenhouse gases in their exhausts.

The third party's tax disc and petrol duty changes would be phased in over four years.

"We will encourage people to dump their gas guzzlers," said Mr Taylor.

The Liberal Democrats are also putting the finishing touches to proposals for a carbon tax, aimed at cutting consumption of coal, oil and gas thereby reducing Britain's emissions of

greenhouse gases. The money raised would be used to cut VAT across the board and to cut employers' National Insurance Contributions.

For Labour, Michael Meacher, pledged that 10 per cent of Britain's electricity would be generated by non-polluting renewable energy sources such as the wind and sun by 2010. Tens of thousands of unemployed young people would get pay and training in an environmental

task force, working on nature conservation, energy conservation and recycling.

The debate was held in front of journalists. All three spokesmen agreed that man-made climate change was the most important and intractable environmental problem. Mr Meacher pledged that Labour would cut annual carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent of their 1990 level by 2010; the others said his party simply could not deliver this.

Mr Gummer admitted what green groups had long suspected - that he has been held back in pushing through environmental policies he wanted. But he blamed his difficulties on a lack of effective opposition from the Labour Party which, he said, had shown little interest until a few months ago.

Uta Bellion, policy director of Friends of the Earth, who chaired the debate, said she was disappointed neither of the two

main parties had made firm commitments on environmental tax reform, which means more tax on "bads" like pollution and resource depletion and less tax on "goods" like employment and income.

Jonathan Porritt, the former Friends of the Earth director, said he believed environmental issues had crept up the politicians' agenda. "I've been encouraged, this isn't a bad start to the campaign."

Meanwhile Greenpeace stayed well away from the campaigning and set course for the Atlantic Ocean. It joined giants like Shell and BP in applying for oil exploration and development licences covering 22,000 square miles of deep and stormy waters to the north and west of Scotland. It has no intention of looking for oil, its application, which cost £3,000, is intended to highlight its objections to any new offshore oil developments.

Youngest girl killer, aged 12

Kim Sengupta

A teenager yesterday became Britain's youngest girl murderer when she was convicted of stabbing a woman 29 times in a killing she committed at the age of 12.

Sharon Carr, now 17, from Camberley, Surrey, was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure for murdering Katie Rackliff, aged 18, in 1992.

Sentencing Carr at Winchester Crown Court, Mr Justice Scott Baker said she was "an extremely dangerous young woman". He lifted as order banning identification for stabbing a 13-year-old fellow pupil

at her school - which had taken place on the second anniversary of Ms Rackliff's murder. Detectives in the Rackliff case were alerted by staff at the young offenders' institution

Your diaries show that this turned you on

where Carr was detained for the stabbing, after she began talking about the killing and writing about it in her diary.

After the jury arrived at their

verdict following five hours' deliberation, Ms Rackliff's father, Joseph Rackliff, 58, said of Carr: "I hope she rots in hell... she should have hung, shouldn't she?"

"Obviously we are very relieved at the verdict, but it doesn't bring Katie back at all. It is still a very sad occasion for us. It's been a tough five years. We are still, as you can see, grieving people and remain that way for the rest of our lives."

In 1968, Mary Bell, 11, was convicted of killing two boys aged four and three in Newcastle. But she was found guilty of manslaughter, not murder.

Born to be a killer, page 4

QUICKLY

Judge defends himself

Judge Anura Cooray last night defended his decision to jail two women jurors for contempt of court after their failure to reach a verdict for "personal reasons". He said juries had to recognise their responsibilities if the criminal justice system was to be upheld. Judge Cooray split legal opinion after sentencing Bonnie Sibot and Carol Barlow to 30 days.

MoD abuse warning

The Ministry of Defence has received a final warning to show real commitment to racial equality or face legal action.

The Commission for Racial Equality said not enough progress had been made in overcoming discrimination.

Cockney sparrow shows dialect is for the birds

Matthew Brace

The hedgerows are in uproar. Cockney sparrows think their Sussex cousins are twitting northern gibberish, and chaffinches in Tyneside cannot make head or tail of the songs sung by their soft, southern relatives in Dorset.

According to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the difference between bird regional accents is so great that moving a Scottish songbird to a bush in the south of England would have disastrous results when it comes to breeding.

The loudest male gets the choice of female mates, and in the words of the RSPB's Chris Harbard, a bird out of his local patch "simply couldn't pull the birds, so to speak".

These dialects are found in



birds in isolated communities that don't move outside their local areas. One young bird will hit upon a song sung by its older relatives and will copy it.

"It might be quite different to a song from a relative in another part of the country."

The disparity in bird accents has long been recognised, but new research from a language and communication professor at Oxford University adds weight to the beliefs. Professor Jean Aitchison, the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford, who gave the Reith lectures last year, has found that human language has more in common with birdsong than the calls of apes.

"The links are stronger, because apes don't have the ability to make a series of distinct different sounds like humans do," she said. "We are able to probably because we can walk upright and have developed an L-shaped vocal tract which produces sounds other than purely nasal ones, like birds."

So, just as a baby grows up with a rich local lilt, so does a young bird.

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THE ENGLISH PATIENT

Oscar night triumph: British film sweeps the board as producers' struggle falls under spotlight

Good news for the Patient, but film industry remains in casualty

Rob Brown
Media Editor

With *The English Patient* pulling off an unprecedented Oscar triumph yesterday, should have been a day of wild celebration for everyone associated with movie-making on this sceptred isle, but the director of the British Film Institute, Wilf Stevenson, had no difficulty containing himself.

Naturally, Mr Stevenson warmly welcomes the fact that a British film had scooped nine Academy Awards, but he remains disturbed by the fact that Britain is making more and more movies which no one in this country will ever see.

"It's a cold, cold mountain," he declares gloomily, pointing to a statistic which shows that half the films made in the UK do not receive any sort of "domestic" cinema release, being cast aside by the American giants which dominate distribution in Britain.

"It's ridiculous and strange, a market failure to have great films which no one sees," sighs Mr Stevenson, who warns that a glut in British films is now a real danger.



Epic passion: Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas in *The English Patient*. Such successes are all too rare for an industry in which many films never see the light of day

Aided by the National Lottery, British film-makers are enjoying something of a boom: investment in UK productions has increased by 60 per cent from £39.4m in 1995 to £65.5m in 1996.

Last year there were 121 features made by British companies or by foreign companies using UK crews, facilities and locations, a sharp increase from the 73 movies made here in 1995.

But the picture becomes a lot bleaker when we zoom in and look at what proportion of these films actually get released.

In 1994 – the last year for which figures are available – less than a third of British films (31 per cent) were put on wide release; that is, shown on 30 or more screens throughout the country.

Another 22 per cent had "only limited release," which means they were shown only in art-house cinemas or on a limited basis in the West End. Even more disturbing, almost half (46.4 per cent) were unrepresented within a year of completion.

Wilf Stevenson explains: "People tend to talk about the film industry as a production industry. It is a distribution in-

dustry and always has been. But in Britain we don't have a distribution industry. What we have is a cottage industry struggling to turn itself somehow into a world force again."

The only sign of hope on the horizon is that a number of consortia bidding for the lottery franchises, designed to create mini studios in this country are proposing to combine production and distribution. The franchises are due to be awarded in mid-May.

Whatever the outcome, the BFI must recognise, in the words of its director, that "concentration on film production to the exclusion of distribution is foolhardy".

If they want their films to get wider distribution, British film-makers will also have to give them wider appeal.

The BFI has frequently

drawn attention to the growing tendency for British films to be aimed at an older, minority audience.

This contrasts markedly with the vast bulk of Hollywood product, which is pitched at teenagers and young adults, who are the most frequent cinema goers.

The only British film to have seriously bucked this trend was *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, which topped the British box office in 1994, grossing a whopping £27m.

Indeed, this was one of just two UK films to recoup its production costs entirely from UK box office sales. It earned 13 times what it cost to make in this country alone. And it took \$53m in the US, where the people who dominate world cinema were all too delighted to distribute it.

David Lister

It is not just the success of *The English Patient* that is the talk of Hollywood today. The Oscars have given movie buffs a host of new heroes, stars who will now command multi-million dollar salaries although they were virtually unknown a year ago.

Geoffrey Rush, the Australian actor who played the pianist David Helfgott in *Shine*, will now be wooed by the Hollywood studios previously unaware of his existence.

And a new breed of actress could at last grace Hollywood

movies following the triumph of Frances McDormand whose delightfully whimsical performance as the pregnant police chief in the comedy thriller *Fargo* won her best actress, beating off British opposition from Kristin Scott Thomas, Brenda Blethyn and Emily Watson.

Leading British film producer David Parfitt commented yesterday that one outcome of this year's Oscars would be to make Hollywood studios more daring. Interesting actresses such as McDormand and Blethyn – far from the typical Beverly Hills glamourpusses – will make the studios' choose less bland fare, he predicted.

The principal award winners

at the Oscars were: best film *The English Patient*; best director Anthony Minghella (*The English Patient*); best actor Geoffrey Rush (*Shine*); best actress Frances McDormand (*Fargo*); best supporting actor Cuba Gooding (*Jerry Maguire*); best supporting actress Julie Christie (*The English Patient*).

There was British success for Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice for best original song for "You Must Love Me" in *Evita*, and for Rachel Portman for best original musical or comedy score for *Emma* – the first time a female composer had even been nominated.

British producer Eric Abraham also set a precedent by win-

ning an Oscar for best foreign language film with *Koh-i-Noor*, a low-budget Czech film. The biggest British disappointment was Mike Leigh's *Secrets And Lies* which failed to win any award despite five nominations.

Lauren Bacall failed to make best supporting actress category, but there were cheers for younger old favourite, Muhammad Ali. *When We Were Kings*, about his 1974 fight with George Foreman, won best documentary feature.

Best original screenplay went to Ethan and Joel Coen for *Fargo*; screenplay adaptation to Billy Bob Thornton for *Sling Blade*; and visual effects to *Independence Day*.

New heroes for movie buffs

Judge courts legal fury by jailing 'no verdict' jurors

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

A judge who controversially jailed two women jurors for failing to reach a verdict mounted an outspoken defence of his actions last night, saying juries must recognise their responsibilities if the criminal justice system is to be upheld.

Is what is believed to be the first decision of its kind in more than three centuries, Judge Anura Cooray split legal opinion

ion after he sentenced Bourne Schot, 20, and Carol Barday, 32, to 30 days for contempt of court on Monday after they cited "personal reasons" for not participating in the jury's deliberations in a counterfeiting currency trial at Knightsbridge Crown Court in London.

The £100,000 17-day prosecution against five defendants, followed by a four-hour summing up, had to be abandoned and a new one ordered at an additional cost of £150,000.

Ms Schot, the jury foreman, who had been planning to study law, later said from Holloway jail: "There wasn't enough evidence for me to reach a decision... I just didn't understand it."

As penal groups castigated what they said was an indefensible use of imprisonment, the 61-year-old judge became the latest judicial figure to resort to issuing a statement through the Lord Chancellor's Department, to defend his actions.

The pair were freed on bail yesterday, pending an appeal. Asked outside prison what she thought of the judge, Ms Schot said: "He's a very spiteful and vindictive man."

Paul Cavardino, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, warned: "If jurors who generally do not understand the evidence in a complicated trial are pressured into bringing in a verdict, this is likely to produce unjust convictions or wrongful acquittals."

People with personal or other difficulties, as the judge made clear in this case, are allowed under the regulations to bring in a verdict according to the evidence at the start of the trial.

The judge said in his statement that the jury "knew full well that they had ample means available to them to inform the court immediately if they were confronted with any difficulties". He added: "I was satisfied that [the women's] refusal to participate in the jury's deliberations constituted a clear contempt of court."

Judges generally look on such representations sympathetically in the interests of convening a jury that will stay the course.

Leroy Redhead, the barrister representing the two women, said Ms Barclay had told the court she could not ethically judge anyone and find them guilty or not guilty, despite having sworn to reach a verdict according to the evidence at the start of the trial.

The judge said in his statement that the jury "knew full well that they had ample means available to them to inform the court immediately if they were confronted with any difficulties". He added: "I was satisfied that [the women's] refusal to participate in the jury's deliberations constituted a clear contempt of court."

Not all commentators condemned Judge Cooray. A spokesman for the Law Society, the solicitors' professional body, said: "The jury system is a vital part of our system of justice. If you do go on a jury, you have responsibilities which shouldn't be taken lightly. Simply opting out is not acceptable."

The controversy comes when the jury system is already under fire for its alleged inability to cope with complicated fraud cases and for its expense.

If it were reflected, a Conservative government would take steps to remove thousands of cases from the system altogether and have them heard summarily by magistrates.

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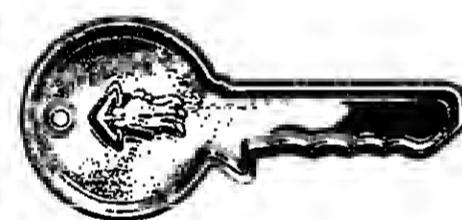
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4
news

Mobile phone charges to fall

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The cost of calling a mobile phone – one of the least understood charges levied on British consumers – is set to plunge by a third following intervention yesterday by the industry watchdog, Ofcom.

Ownership of cellular phones is no longer confined to thrush yuppie executives, the telephone regulator, Don Cruickshank said, yet the industry has failed to make private consumers aware of the true

cost of ringing a cellular phone from a standard British Telecom residential line.

Under the proposals, Cellnet, Vodafone and BT would have to knock about 10p a minute off incoming call charges on mobile handsets, which currently average 32p a minute. Out of this the mobile networks take about 75 per cent of the revenues, with BT picking up the rest.

The reduction would knock

the revenues of the mobile companies just as they appear to be on the verge of another painful price war.

In a clear demonstration of the increasingly tough approach by utility regulators, Mr Cruickshank warned he may have to force them to comply. "My firm view is that prices are too high, which means the industry can act or I will."

Calling a mobile phone from a BT line during the day can be

very costly, because the call needs to be routed on to the cellular network in much the same way as an outgoing call. Ringing the Vodafone or Cellnet networks, responsible for 80 per cent of the 6.8 million mobiles in the UK, costs 37.5p a minute from a BT line during weekdays. Only at weekends does the cost drop to a more bearable 12.5p.

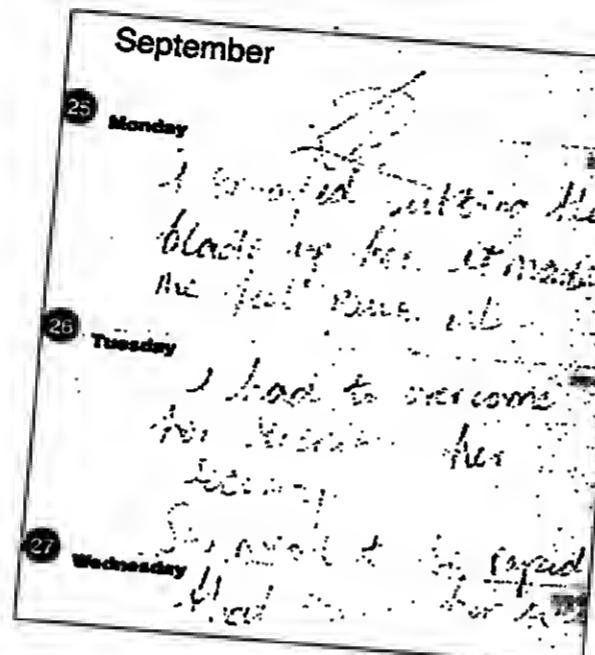
The two smaller operators, Orange and One2One, used to have much lower charges for in-

affairs, said Ofcom's figures were "a bit off the wall".

He added: "People will assume our profits are going to fall by tens of millions of pounds, which they won't."

Last night Ofcom and BT seemed to be on another collision course. A BT spokesman said: "We're surprised at this. We maintain that profit margins on our calls to mobiles are the same as for the rest of our network. We'll be trying to find out why they seem too high to Don Cruickshank. They don't seem high to us."

Girl who stabbed hairdresser to death at the age of 12 is detained at Her Majesty's pleasure



**'I was born
to be a killer.
Every night
I see the
Devil in my
dreams'**

Kim Sengupta

Sharon Carr, a girl obsessed with death and violence, secured her place in criminal history yesterday as Britain's youngest female murderer.

She had killed at the age of 12 – a savage attack in which a teenage hairdresser was mutilated with 29 stab wounds. The victim, Katie Rackliff, had been picked out at random as she walked home from a nightclub in June 1992.

The trial at Winchester Crown Court was told that in the years that followed, Carr seemed to be exultant over the killing, and yet haunted by it. She was endlessly writing about the murder and drawing pictures of a knife.

Samples of her notes were graphic. In one she said: "I am a killer. Killing is my business – and business is good." In another: "I was born to be a murderer. Killing for me is a mass turn-on and it just makes me so high I never want to come down. Every night I see the Devil in my dreams – sometimes even in my mirror, but I realise it was just me."

Four years after the murder, a diary entry stated: "I bring the knife into her chest. Her eyes are closing. She is pleading with me so I bring the knife to her again and again. I don't want to hurt her but I need to

do violence to her ... I need to overcome her beauty, her serenity, her security. There I see her face when she died. I know she feels her life being slowly drawn from her and I hear her gasp. I guess she was trying to breathe."

"The air stops in the back of her throat. I know all her life her breathing has worked, but it does not now. And I am joyful."

Were these fantasies of a deeply disturbed mind, as the defence claimed? Or, as the Crown held, the grim memories of an "evil and precocious" schoolgirl who gloried in what she had done? The jury had no

where she tried to strangle two members of staff. Two counts of actual bodily harm were taken into account when she was convicted of wounding Ann-Marie, and sentenced to be detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure.

At Bulwell Hall young offenders' institution, staff alerted police after Carr began talking about the killing of Katie Rackliff on the telephone to her friends and family and wrote about it in her diaries. She also began to give details of what she had done to a prison officer, on whom she had developed a crush, as well as talking about it to a probation officer.

The Rackliff killing had re-

mained unsolved despite four years of intensive investigation by police. Some of the knife

blows that Katie suffered in the attack had gone straight through her body and out the other side. Her sexual organs were mutilated, and her clothes pulled up, although there was

no evidence of sexual assault.

Detectives seized Carr's writings and drawings, and questioned her for 27 hours. She



Face of evil: Sharon Carr – 'extremely dangerous because she is clearly prepared to kill without an adequate motive ... a great danger to the public'. Inset: One of the diary entries that helped convict her. Photograph: PA



Katie Rackliff: Her murder baffled police for years

gave three different accounts of how Katie had been killed, but in all of them the central theme was she had repeatedly stabbed her.

In two of the versions, Carr said she was with two boys in a car at the time of the attack, and they had engaged in sexual activity with Katie before dumping the body. She named the two

boys. Police interviewed them but they provided alibis for each other, and were eliminated from the inquiry. However, the prosecution could not satisfactorily explain how Katie, who weighed 8st 8lbs, was dragged across a pavement and around a corner by a 12-year-old girl.

Carr continued with her writing even after being interviewed by the police. In April 1996, the month before she was charged, she wrote: "I am not like one of those pretty girls who break down due to a guilty conscience. Through six and a half years of causing people grief, I still have not found one." On 7 June, her diary read: "Respect to Katie Rackliff. Four years today."

Sadistic violence seemed to be part of her life. Police discovered that she had decapitated a neighbour's dog with a spade, and there was also a "suggestion" from a friend that she had fried live hamsters.

Det Sgt Paul Clements, who interviewed Carr extensively, recalled: "It was almost as if she was in another world. What sticks in my mind about talking to her was the coldness. Most

people that you interview show some feeling as to why they have done what they have done. But with her there was a complete absence of emotion and reason."

Carr was born in Belize in 1981 and was brought up by her mother and stepfather – a soldier. After moving to England the family settled in Camberley, Surrey. Her parents split up and she was briefly fostered, but after a month she returned to the home of her mother. At school, her teachers initially described her as polite and helpful, but her behaviour deteriorated and she became disruptive and attention-seeking.

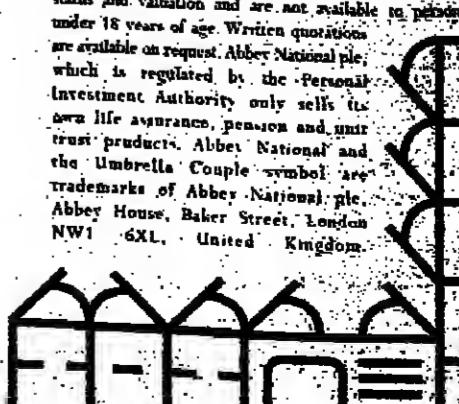
Criminal psychologist Gordon Tressler said: "This is a difficult case to understand. One can find precedents of young children killing other young children, but in this case it was a child killing someone who was almost an adult."

"This is an extremely dangerous person because she is clearly prepared to kill without an adequate motive. That makes her conduct very unpredictable and very dangerous. She is a great danger to the public."

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election countdown

Tories raise spectre of trade unions

Barrie Clement and Fran Abrams

The Conservatives yesterday played the trade-union "card" for the first time in the election battle, denouncing Labour's plan for legislation on recognition as a recipe for industrial blackmail.

Tories cancelled a planned statement on school tests by Gillian Shepherd in order to make way for an attack by Michael Heseltine on the dangers of increased union power under Labour. A report in yesterday's *Daily Mail* claiming to have discovered a union "hit-list" of 63 employers prompted the sudden switch of electoral tactics. The list purported to reveal the names of employers which would be "dragged" into recognising unions if Tony Blair came to power. Labour plans to impose compulsory recognition where more than

half of a workforce vote for it. The *Mail's* "revelation" led to fresh expressions of concern by employers about the policy and a cock fight between Mr Heseltine and Gordon Brown, shadow chancellor.

It also exposed a serious lack of detail in Labour's policy. The deputy prime minister accused the Opposition of changing its policy three yesterday morning. Earlier Mr Heseltine told journalists it had been a long battle to curb unions since the Winter of Discontent in 1979. "A Labour government could blow it. The evidence stares us in the face. Today a shocking revelation: a list of 63 British companies that have been targeted as the first victims of Tony Blair's pay-back to the union bosses.

He said companies would become battlegrounds in which different unions would fight out historic rivalries. "It would

be yesterday's demarcation disputes run riot," he said.

Mr Heseltine said Labour's plans would license industrial blackmail by groups of workers who could disrupt the whole supply chain. The "hit-list" seen by the *Mail* was prepared by the union-backed Labour Research Department for the TUC and was published last week. It is part of a six-monthly survey of workplaces where unions are seeking recognition. The *Mail* chose to call it a hit-list drawn up in preparation for new legislation. In fact officials in most unions will have in mind hundreds of companies where recognition could be achieved using the legislation.

It became clear yesterday that Labour's plans were by no means fully formed. Spin-doctors ventured that the Central Arbitration Committee could be used to rule in disputes between unions and employers of what constituted 50 per cent of the workforce. Mr Brown suggested it might be a judge. There has been doubt as to whether entire firms or units within firms would be considered. Mr Brown said: "A recognised unit would be something that would have to be agreed not simply by the unions saying that would be the case but agreed usually by employers and employees themselves. But if there were not then by a third party."

He quoted President Ronald Reagan as someone who had endorsed a more prescriptive system in the US. The shadow chancellor said he did not believe there would be very many disputes over recognition. Out of the top 50 companies, 44 already recognised unions.

He would not give examples of workplaces ripe for recognition. In almost all cases deals would be struck as a result of voluntary agreement.

Mr Brown said he would be issuing a point-by-point rebuttal of the *Daily Mail* story. Unions said the Conservatives were guilty of "hysteria" and "McCarthyism". They preferred to call the "hit-list" a roll-call of exploited workers, where employees could not raise problems of low pay or health and safety issues.

John Redwood campaigning in Wolverhampton yesterday



Photograph: Mike Scott/Newsbeam

Panic stations in Smith Square

Fran Abrams

The Conservative campaign team threw away its script yesterday, in a move which made the party's media strategy appear increasingly panicky.

For the second time this week, an impromptu press conference was thrown at Central Office to make capital out of newspaper stories which were damaging to Labour.

With Labour's rapid-rebuttal machine geared up to respond within an hour to any Conservative statement, the party is trying to tighten up its act. But Labour's campaign organiser, Brian Wilson, accused the Tories of behaving "like drowning men".

An announcement by Gillian Shepherd on school tests, billed for yesterday's morning press conference, was dropped for an attack by Michael Heseltine on Labour plans for trade union recognition, prompted by a report in the *Daily Mail*. Although

Mrs Shepherd appeared at Central Office, her plans for more tests for 14-year-olds were relegated to the fax machine.

On Monday, *The Independent's* revelation that Labour was planning hospital closures was followed belatedly by an afternoon press conference hosted by the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell.

Although the Conservatives denied they had been forced to change strategy, the sharpness of Labour's machinery has left them feeling exposed.

When *The Independent* published its story in Monday's paper, Labour health spokesman Chris Smith was on the phone to its newsdesk before 1am with a denial. Yesterday's Conservative change of schedule had brought a response from the shadow education secretary, David Blunkett, in ample time for lunchtime broadcasts.

A Conservative spokesman denied that the change of plan revealed any lack of coherence.

Labour plan for welfare reform

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Labour will increase the share of national income spent on education, and reduce the share spent on unemployment, reversing the trend of the Tory years, Gordon Brown said yesterday.

Commenting on yesterday's *Independent* report on deep cuts in the Education and Employment budget, the shadow Chancellor told a Labour press conference it was true that Government spending on training and employment was being cut.

"It's been cut by 36 per cent since 1991-92," he said.

But Gillian Shepherd, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, told a Conservative press conference: "I fear *The Independent* has got it totally wrong."

"In the first place, it is of course a matter of public record that we have reduced the amount of money we are spending on unemployed people, because the number of unemployed people has reduced.

"The one follows the other, except, of course with the Labour Party, I recall that Gordon Brown in November 1995 said the Labour Party would spend £3bn the eleventh time it has been spent to get 250,000 people back into work. Since then, we have put 315,000 people back into work without a £3bn tax, which is obviously a chimera."

Mr Brown said: "Training, as well as employment measures, are now suffering. It is indeed one of the reasons why our windfall levy is absolutely essential: to tackle the problem of youth and long-term unemployment and training."

"We've got this amazing situation that the figures this morning in *The Independent* highlight, where unemployment now costs this Government more than education."

Mr Brown said: "Training, as well as employment measures, are now suffering. It is indeed one of the reasons why our windfall levy is absolutely essential: to tackle the problem of youth and long-term unemployment and training."

"So that is why it will be stated quite specifically in our manifesto, that we will reverse the trend of the Conservative years,

"You cannot continue as a civilised society, with the hopes for the younger generation being fulfilled, if you are spending more on the problem of failure, that is the costs of unemployment, than you're spending on investment in your future, and that is education."

"So that is why it will be stated quite specifically in our manifesto, that we will reverse the trend of the Conservative years,

a multi-racial school 20 miles away in Birmingham, John Major stood by firm immigration controls but said he did not want immigration to be raised as a partisan issue in the election.

"What I am not prepared to see is this issue raised as a partisan political issue because we have seen the most immense improvements in race relations in this country. I intend these improvements should continue."

Mr Budgen said he had always watched immigration, as a local issue, as Mr Major, as the MP for Huntington, had to watch the price of wheat. "I thought these silly [Labour] proposals for liberalising immigration controls had been forgotten. It was not until I read this in *The Independent* I thought this is something that needs to be investigated."

Mr Budgen told a joint press conference with Mr Redwood in his constituency offices: "The position in Wolverhampton and

the West Midlands is that whole areas have been transformed by immigration. The whole population, white, black and Asian, fully understands the necessity of strict immigration controls as the principle means of the continuance of good race relations."

"If there is to be an attempt to curry favour with Asian organisations by relaxing immigration controls, it becomes an issue. However much the leaders of the Tory party may say they would rather it was not discussed, the issue is whether the people particularly in affected areas like Wolverhampton want it discussed. What is an election issue is not decided by the politicians."

He said Mr Powell had painted the future in "terms which turned out to be excessively dramatic ... We haven't had the 'rivers of blood' because we have had strict immigration control".

Promoted by Mr Redwood, Mr Budgen added: "I am not predicting a future rivers of blood. I am saying that race relations have much improved and we want to ensure they continue to do so."

Mr Redwood said it was perfectly reasonable for Conservative candidates, where it was a matter of interest, to cross examine Labour about its plans for not implementing the "primary purpose rule" allowing immigrants to bring in their families.

Mr Redwood accused Labour of making if an issue by proposing the changes to the immigration controls.

He added: "I would rather it was not - I think it would be much better if it was not a partisan issue."

He said: "Mr Powell had

Painted the future in "terms which turned out to be excessively dramatic ... We haven't had the 'rivers of blood' because we have had strict immigration control".

Mr Redwood said: "It is why I am very pleased my party did not raise it, did not take to the electorate proposals for making changes in the immigration policies of this country ... Labour have made it an issue."

Major draws line on Europe

Colin Brown and Anthony Bevins

John Major yesterday ruled out any hardening of the Tories' "wait-and-see" approach to the single European currency before polling day and made it more difficult for the Tories to play the Euro-sceptic card in an attempt to pull off a general election coup against Tony Blair.

Mr Major warned that the pound would rise in value, damaging Britain's exports if Britain at this stage opted out of a single European currency. His remarks will dismay some Tory Euro-sceptics who believe their campaign to "save the pound" is the only way to save the party from defeat by Labour.

John Redwood, whose book attacking the single currency will be published today, was campaigning yesterday with a leading Euro-sceptic, Nicholas Budgen, in Wolverhampton, only 20 miles from the Prime Minister, and rejected his stance.

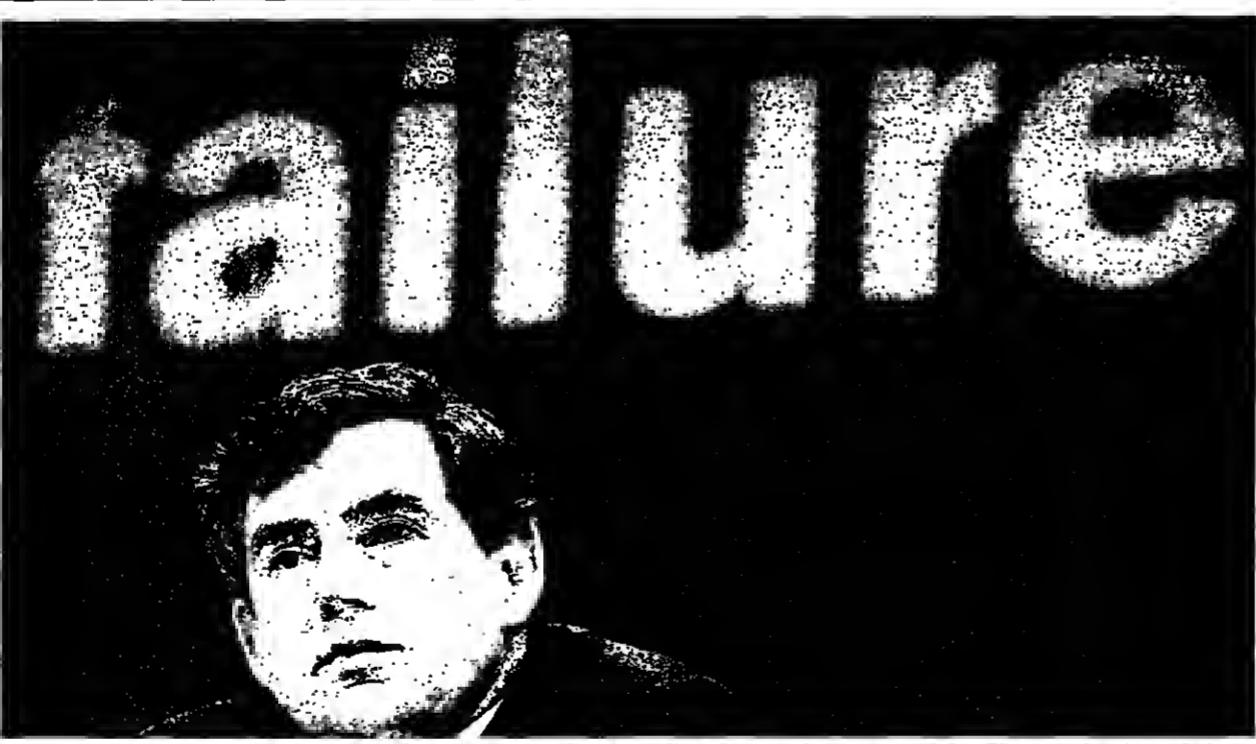
Mr Redwood, a former Secretary of State for Wales and the past challenger for his leadership, said: "I am in a different position. I am a backbencher, wishing to help public debate in trying to persuade the Government - when it makes up its mind finally, it makes up its mind by saying no."

Mr Major, campaigning in Birmingham, said: "What we have made clear is we will be there negotiating the single currency to protect Britain's interests. No British prime minister can properly opt out of those negotiations and be in a position to protect British interests. I will be there negotiating on that."

He said that if a weak euro was created, countries putting their money into Europe would target the two remaining strong currencies, the Swiss franc and sterling. "That would put up the exchange rate of sterling."

At Labour's London press conference, the shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, said Mr Major would become the prisoner of Tory Euro-sceptics, if another Conservative government was elected on 1 May.

Publishing a list of 132 Conservative MPs and candidates who are defying the party line on Europe, he said: "A re-elected Conservative Party would be ungovernable and, in the words of the Chancellor himself, would be incapable of being led."



Gordon Brown at Labour's press conference yesterday launching its employment policies. Photograph: Kieran Doherty

Ugly rumours, purple loons, but drugs? Never

Steve Boggan

He wore purple loons and cowboy boots - he even sang in a band called Ugly Rumours - but unlike his wishy-washy counterpart in America, Tony Blair was never tempted to try drugs.

During his campaign to become President, Bill Clinton admitted to taking a puff of wacky baccy, an admission that became even wackier when he claimed that he didn't inhale.

But there were no such half-measures for Mr Blair. Yesterday, he categorically stated that, despite leading a somewhat Bohemian existence as an undergraduate at Oxford, he had never tried drugs. "I believe we need to appoint a figurehead in the battle against drugs - someone who will both lead the fight against drugs and help educate young people not to take them," he said after meeting pupils in an anti-drugs class at the Dyce Academy.

The appointment of such a figure would signal the determination of the Government that it was not prepared to tolerate the waste of young lives. The drug war will have clout and direct access to Government, he said. "This appointment will be a clear manifesto commitment. It will be a valuable added weapon against one of the great evils of our time."

Despite referring to the office as an American innovation, officials representing the American drug user, General Barry McCaffrey, said they had not co-

ordinated with Mr Blair's team. Don Maple, General McCaffrey's spokesman, said: "They haven't contacted us as far as I'm aware ... but I wish you luck." Mr Maple did not wish to gauge the impact the establishment of a drug tsar could have in the UK, but since its creation in America in 1988, the number of drug abusers had fallen from 24m to 12m, he said.

Mr Blair's initiative coincided with a call from a committee of the Church of Scotland for the legalisation of cannabis to be considered. The Board of Social Responsibility said yesterday that it wants a Royal Commission to be set up to look at legalisation.

Its convener, the Rev Bill Wallace, said: "We are, in effect, saying look before you consider leaping into the unknown. The experience of legalising alcohol and tobacco would indicate such a change would be well nigh irreversible."

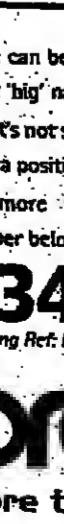
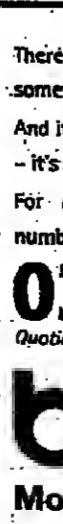
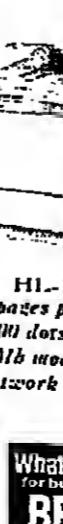
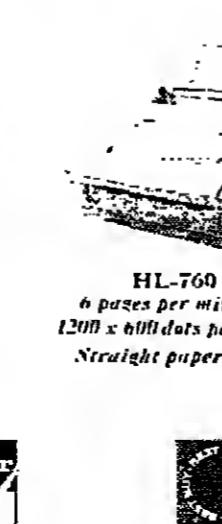
The call came following a survey of more than 2,500 pupils in Scottish secondary schools which found that half had experimented with drugs and a quarter were still using them.

Leading article, page 19

FACT

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election countdown

Wobbly Tories recall creative guru

Paul McCann
on how Charles Saatchi is now
writing the
slogan for a
new poster

The Conservative Party is re-living its famous "wobbly Thursday" in the run-up to the 1997 general election after a crisis over its advertising campaign.

The party has called in Charles Saatchi, the reclusive creative guru of the Saatchi brothers, to write his first slogan for the latest poster campaign, launched this week: "Britain is Booming Don't let Labour Blow It."

Sources close to the party's advertising agency admit that previous posters in this campaign have not been effective because of a lack of focus, so it is returning to a tried and tested formula.

After a rogue poll in the week before the 1987 election, Margaret Thatcher called in adviser Sir Tim Bell, and Frank Lowe, of Lowe-Howard Spink, over the head of Saatchi and Saatchi to create the slogan "Life's Better with the Conservatives - Don't let Labour Ruin It" which was used in a massive £2.5m newspaper campaign for the last week of the election.

Although this week's new poster was created by Charles Saatchi, sources close to the party suggest that by harking back to the 1987 strategy, it proves that Sir Tim Bell is in charge of the Tory campaign again.

"It is a proven strategy and is an effective piece of communication - as the 1987 election clearly showed," said John Banks, managing director of advertising agency Banks Hollings O'Shea, who acted as an adviser to the 1987 campaign.

There was a falling out between party chairman Brian Mawhinney and the team advising him on advertising - Sir Tim Bell, Lord Saatchi and Lord Chadlington (formerly Peter Gummer) - two weeks ago about the merits of the weeping lio and family crying a red tears posters. Polling had shown that both campaigns were unpopular and unconvincing. That prompted a re-



Out of the shadows: Backroom staff checking final details before yesterday's press conference at Conservative Central Office in Smith Square

Photograph: Brian Hains

think on advertising and the first pre-testing of posters with focus groups.

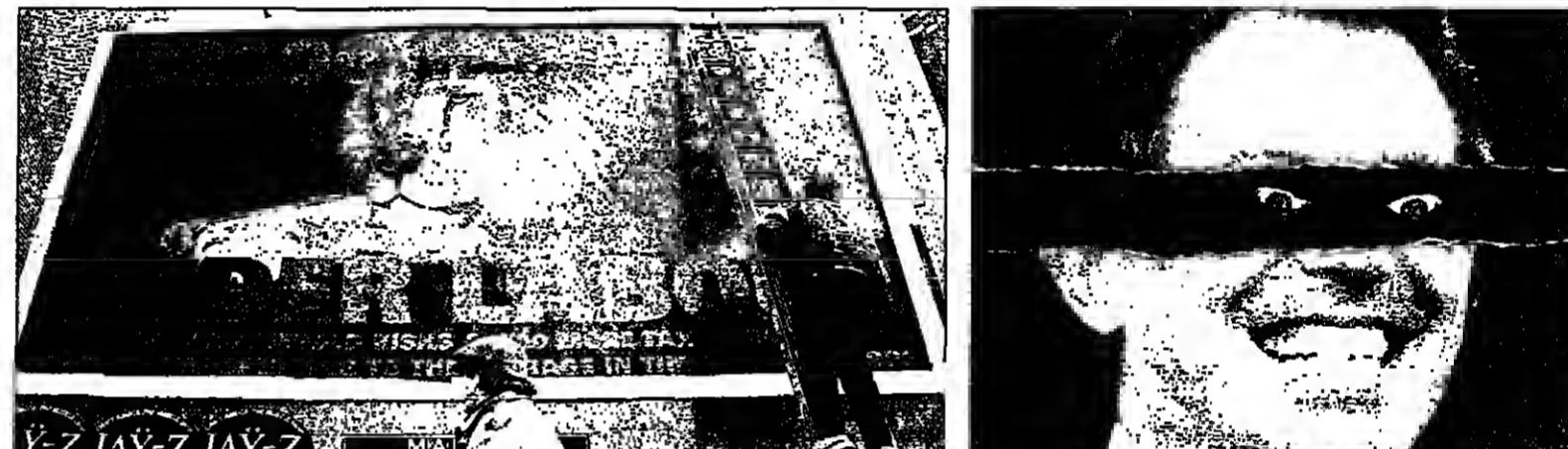
However, even the pre-tested "Tony & Bill" poster has been condemned as confusing. "This is the least defaced poster they have had," said a poster industry insider. "It seems to be because one can work out if it's actually for or against Labour."

The new poster has a clearer message. "It looks like it has started to the right area at last," said a senior Labour Party source. "But it is too late."

The Labour Party's agency, BMP DDB, is understood to be holding back its major advertising thrust until after Easter.



Image conscious: The weeping lion, not considered a roaring success; and the demon eyes poster, which at least generated publicity



Fight on 'clean' council ticket

Canvass call shocks hanged man's niece

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent



Maria Dingwall, left, who is for her uncle, Derek Bentley, campaigning for a pardon hanged for murder in 1953

The niece of Derek Bentley, who was hanged in 1953 for the murder of a policeman, has been asked by the Tory party whether she supports capital punishment.

Maria Dingwall, the daughter of Bentley's sister, Iris, who died last January, has been campaigning for a pardon for her uncle and for his case to be referred to the Court of Appeal. She is vehemently opposed to capital punishment.

She was asked her views on hanging by a Conservative Party worker while waiting to hear about her mother who had just undergone an operation. Iris Bentley, 65, died from cancer days later without knowing whether her brother had been pardoned.

Maria Dingwall, 34, said: "I just couldn't believe they were asking me. I told them I was Derek Bentley's niece and they didn't say anything. I felt quite shocked."

Derek Bentley was hanged after being convicted of taking part in the murder of PC Sidney Miles in 1952 during a bungled burglary in south London. Christopher Craig, 16, his accomplice, fired the shot that killed the policeman, but officers claimed that Bentley had been pardoned.

Mr Swan is seeking sponsorship.

The campaign launched yesterday by the People's Trust, the anti-corruption campaign, announced it was spending £1m

donated by Mohamed Al Fayed, owner of Harrods.

Mr Swan's candidacy will

draw more attention to the troubled Labour stronghold,

where the council has been the

subject of a district auditor's re-

port criticising the lack of con-

trol over foreign trips and

extravagant "working lunches".

The auditor has referred the

matter to the South Yorkshire

police, who are conducting a

wide-ranging investigation into

the affair and have interviewed a

number of councillors.

Mr Swan said that the local council has been run by an in-

side group called the Miners' Community Group, which

meets in secret to decide coun-

cil policy and dispense patronage.

"If a councillor fails foul of the Miners' Community Group, they are ostracised. If they

stand up to ask a question in Labour Group meetings they

are shouted down." The leader, Peter Welsh and the deputy leader, Ray Stockhill, have re-

signed following the publication of the district auditor's report in January.

AC/DC is targeting Mr

Hughes because he is a former

councillor who was chairman of the social services committee.

There is no evidence on any

wrongdoing on his part.

all subjects in the curriculum and the need for them to be well taught, she said.

"Above all ... this will emphasise Conservative concern for the achievements of every pupil and the importance of every educational route to success. These measures will encourage all pupils to achieve excellence," she said.

The announcement was attacked by teachers' unions, but brought an equivocal response from Labour, which said its priorities were the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, party sources said, testing at 14 would be considered as part of a full review planned for the millennium.

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election countdown

Plaid Cymru intensifies its focus on devolution for Wales as it launches its campaign for 40 seats

Party pins its hopes on tide turning

Tony Heath

Plaid Cymru's focus on devolution was intensified yesterday with a vitriolic attack on Labour when the nationalist party launched its campaign for 40 seats at Cardiff Castle.

The party leader, Dafydd Wigley, who sits on a majority of 14.47% in Caernarfon-Gwynedd, was soon on the offensive: "There is a tide of anger running against Labour's devolution proposals. We're not looking to an assembly as an institution just to make us feel better. It must have real power."

Barring the Conservatives, all parties are committed in some degree to the desirability of shifting power from London to Cardiff. But Labour's proposed referendum - and its wording - is crucial to nationalist aspirations.

Mr Wigley wants a four-part referendum - covering the status quo, Labour's plan, an assembly with law-making power and full self-government within five years.

"A 'yes' or 'no' referendum would be a waste of time. When we see what's on offer we will

call a special conference to decide our stance," he said. Opponents point out that a four-option ballot paper could lead to an indecisive result and that the option of the status quo would invite a bored electorate to play safe.

The party has yet to recruit a force strong enough to break out from its fastness in rural Welsh-speaking Wales. Attempts to make headway in the heavily populated south have failed, despite some heroic efforts. The low point of the 1991 Monmouth by-election when Screaming Lord Sutch won 314 votes to Plaid's 277 is unlikely to be repeated, but the outlook is cloudy.

The nationalists won four seats in 1992 against Labour's twenty-seven. The Conservatives' six and the Liberal Democrats' one.

A recent survey by National

Opinion Polls and HTV put Labour support at 60 per cent with the Tories on 19 per cent. Plaid on 12 per cent, the Liberal Democrats on 7 per cent and others on 3 per cent. Plaid can take some consolation from Wales's 22 council chambers where it has 115 representatives.

Two Plaid seats look safe - Caernarfon and Meirionnydd-Nant Conwy. In Ynys Mon, the Conservative candidate was just over 1,000 votes adrift in 1992 and the Liberal Democrats are anxious to retake Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire North which went to Plaid five years ago.

to the Conservatives' 41 - and Labour's 73.

Tory support in Wales seems to be going into free fall. Early evidence of nationalist pick up came at the 1994 Euro elections when the party polled 162,478 votes to the Tories' 138,323. But however good that news was for Plaid, the bad news for the party is that in racing terms Labour won that contest by a distance when it triumphed in all five Euro seats with 530,749 votes.

Mr Wigley remains optimistic: "We are poised to become the main opposition to Labour," he predicted as his troops filed from the castle. But the uneven spread of support remains a stumbling block. Last time round in the eight most urban seats - four in Cardiff and two each in Newport and Swansea - only 8,251 votes for Plaid Cymru. In all, 20 deposits were lost.

Not everyone in Wales gives devolution the highest priority. The National Health Service, education and the economic plight of the old south Wales mining valleys figure high on the agenda.

A bitter row over proposals



Recruiting force: Dafydd Wigley (centre right) with members of Plaid Cymru carrying the national flower in Cardiff yesterday. Photograph: Rob Stratton

to close hospitals in rural mid-Wales, the continuing unease over the power of quangos which control around £2bn of Wales's annual spend, and the state of cash-starved schools are grabbing headlines west of Offa's Dyke.

One of Wales's leading political analysts, Denis Balsom, confirms this. "Devolution is important but I can't help pointing out that the emphasis has something to do with the anti-government feeling," he said. The nationalists are pledged

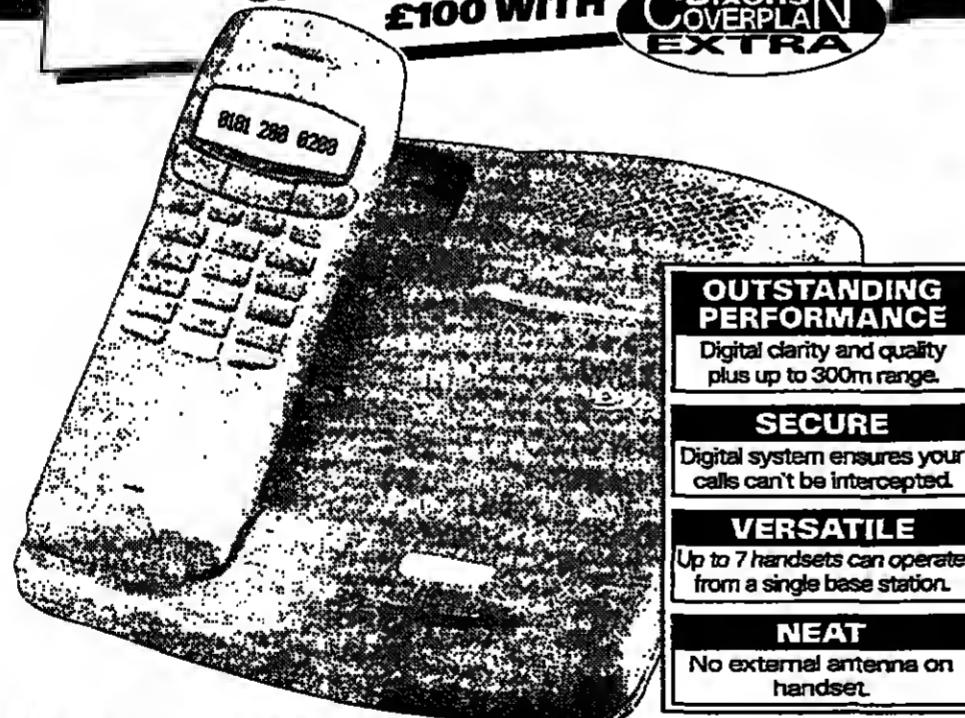
to fight all 40 Welsh seats - boundary changes have added 2 to the 38 contested in 1992. The party makes its top priority Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, where boundary revisions will test its mettle. Another castle, Carreg Cennen, domi-

nates the latter constituency, but compared with Cardiff's Roman connection it is a youngster of some 800 years old, and probably less likely to fall than Carmarthen's Edward I seat which towers over Mr Wigley's stronghold.

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Dixons
There's a great deal going on

History of Welsh nationalism

Plaid Cymru is firmly rooted in the Welsh language and culture. Today, the ancient tongue is spoken by 500,000 of Wales's 2.9 million people. The party was founded in 1925 largely to challenge the idea of British nationality and to reverse the assimilation of Welsh into English. Wales briefly sniffed freedom in 1918 when Owen Glendower held a parliament at Machynlleth in 1404. Plaid hopes for a political renaissance some time in the next century.

Nationalism gained momentum in 1921 when the then Plaid leader, Saunders Lewis, and two colleagues set fire to a Royal Air Force camp on the Llyn Peninsula in protest at the threat to the Welsh language.

Gwynfor Evans became the first Plaid MP when he won a spectacular by-election at Carmarthen on 14 July 1966. The party has four MPs - Dafydd Wigley, par-

ty president, who holds Caernarfon with a 14.47% majority; Huw Wynn Jones; Ynys Mon, with 1.10%; Elin Llwyd, Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, with 2.61% majority; Cynog Dafis, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, 3.193.

Nationalist MP Lord Elles-Thomas (formerly Dafis) is the only Plaid MP, a one-time Marxist, sits on the Lords cross-bench and chairs the Welsh Language Board, known as "the quango for the lingo". The party has an ambivalent relationship with the Welsh Language Society which several leading members belong.

The nationalist cause was not helped by the activities of the clandestine arsonists Meibion Glyndwr (Welsh for Sons of Glyndwr) in the Eighties when more than 200 holiday homes in Wales were set alight. Plaid explicitly condemns these fire-raisers. Plaid Cymru firmly supports nuclear disarmament.

Scotland's safest seat seeks heir apparent

Stephen Goodwin

The tragicomedy of Allan Stewart's resignation from the safest Tory seat in Scotland could well end in a return to Parliament for Sir Michael Hirst, chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party.

Sir Michael, a 51-year-old company director, is the clear clear-runner after it was confirmed by the party yesterday that Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, would not abandon his marginal Stirling constituency for the Eastwood safe haven - a predominantly middle-class dormitory to the south of Glasgow.

Mr Stewart's resignation late on Monday evening left Scottish Tories temporarily stunned and delivered a jolt to John Major just hours after he had at last taken the election initiative over the economy.

Mr Stewart's decision followed weekend press reports linking him with a 47-year-old married woman he met last year at a clinic for treating alcohol problems. Catherine "Bunny" White, who has four children,

his parliamentary colleagues quickly gave way to speculation over a successor. Mr Stewart had the biggest Conservative majority in Scotland in the 1992 election - a comfortable 11,688 votes.

Constituency officials described as "preposterous" a suggestion that Mr Forsyth might try and switch to Eastwood. A swing of only 0.3 per cent to Labour would deprive the Secretary of his Stirling seat.

Two other Cabinet ministers, Malcolm Rifkind and Ian Lang, also face tough battles, but party officials in Edinburgh said they did not expect any sitting MP to apply for Eastwood.

In a succession of interviews yesterday, Sir Michael repeatedly avoided ruling himself out - other than a frank admission that if the constituency association wanted "a bright young thing" then he was not in the running.

If Sir Michael was selected, however, it would leave the Tories with a further headache, since as party chairman he is responsible for co-ordinating the election campaign in Scotland.

Stepping down: Stewart's resignation stunned Tories

was said to have stayed at the MP's London flat.

Last Sunday, Mr Stewart, 54, posed for photographs with his wife Susie at their home in Neilston, Strathclyde, but refused to discuss Mrs White. An MP since 1979, he stepped down as a Scottish Office minister after a confrontation with road protesters on the site of the M77 led to a £200 fine for breach of the peace.

Expressions of sadness by

Propaganda campaign to stop people voting

Kim Sengupta

An extensive propaganda campaign is being carried out by extremist political groups to stop people from voting in the general election. Thousands of pamphlets and leaflets have been distributed across the country attacking the main parties, and with the insistent message that nothing can be changed through the ballot box.

The posters are abusive, one has photos of Tony Blair, John Major, and Paddy Ashdown, with the headline "wankers", while another urged "Vote Blair for another Tory government, F*** the election".

The "wankers" poster is produced by the Committee of Public Safety, the one accusing Tony Blair of befooling another Tory government is being distributed by the Anti-Election Alliance.

ALL POLITICIANS ARE GREEDY LYING SCUM
VOTING CHANGES NOTHING

One of the campaign stickers with its anti-voting message

The Anti-Election Alliance's box number leads back to 27 Old Gloucester Street, in Covent Garden, central London. The address houses a telephone message box, as well as box number for a variety of fringe political groups including the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus.

A series of messages left for Class War eventually led to a call from a man named Dave, who said he represented the organisation. He claimed the politicians "are taking the public for a ride" and claimed the election was a pointless, expensive exercise.

At 27 Old Gloucester Street, Bristol, the Revolutionary Communist Party stated it was certainly opposed to the election, but was not aware the Anti-Election Alliance was part of the RCP.

Army in the glasshouse over racial bias

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence yesterday received a final warning to show real commitment to racial equality or face legal action.

The Commission for Racial Equality said that not enough progress had been made in overcoming blatant racial discrimination in the Army since the MoD signed an agreement with them in March last year. Yesterday it said it was not satisfied with progress and gave the Army another year to put matters right. If the Army does not do so, the CRE will issue a non-discrimination notice requiring the MoD to take specific actions or be taken to court.

The CRE cited the report from the Office of Public Management, released last week, which gave more disturbing evidence of the "long-gone, long-neglected and deeply entrenched problem of racism within the armed services." The commission was particularly concerned that the MoD had that report for six months - from last September - before it was released.



Solitary figure: Mark Campbell, the first black soldier to join the Sovereign's escort of the Household Cavalry, which a study found was particularly short of non-white soldiers

and that it should have been implementing the action plan which it had agreed with the CRE during that time. "We all know there are few black soldiers in the Army. What we want to know is what they are doing about it," said Chris Myatt, a CRE spokesman.

About 1 per cent of the armed forces comes from ethnic minorities compared with about 6 per cent of the workforce as a whole. The Army has slightly more non-white soldiers than the Navy has sailors. But the small number of non-white service men and women

is compounded by instances of blatant racial harassment and abuse. The Office of Public Management report found that some senior officers still condone these practices.

The action plan agreed last March stipulates two types of activity. The first is monitoring

to establish how many non-white people there are in the forces and their career patterns. The second requires the MoD to come up with workable ways of solving the problem.

When the MoD agreed to implement the plan the CRE said it would withhold a non-dis-

crimination notice for a year and would then abandon it all together if the Army achieved adequate progress. It has not done so, the CRE said, "primarily in the areas which give a measure of the level of commitment and willingness to change attitudes and practice".

A year on, the commissioners yesterday deferred a decision on the use of a non-discrimination notice for a further year with a six-month progress review in September.

The action plan was launched last year after a study found the Household Cavalry was partic-

ularly short of non-white soldiers, although the problem runs throughout the Army.

Yesterday's report said the Commander of the Household Cavalry had issued a directive and a new recruitment leaflet which, it said, "provide the necessary foundation for equal opportunities in the Household Cavalry." The report also noted progress in encouraging non-white candidates to apply to become officers: the introduction of good systems for collecting ethnic origin information on applicants to join the forces and numerous written instructions and orders.

However, the commissioners reminded the Army that monitoring is only a first step.

A chastened MoD responded yesterday saying: "We are pleased to note that the CRE have recognised the progress that we have made in several areas of race relations and ethnic monitoring.

"We are however disappointed that the CRE has not seen fit to lift the possibility of a non-discrimination notice and we are considering carefully all the comments they have made."

... but Marines stay men-only

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The Royal Marines are to retain their men-only policy for frontline troops for the time being after an industrial tribunal upheld their right to turn down a job application from a woman chef.

But the tribunal asked the European Court of Justice to rule on the legitimacy of British law which allows the armed forces to reject women for some postings on the grounds that they may undermine "combat effectiveness".

Angela Sirdar, an ex-army cook, was turned down because catering staff in the marines are expected to operate as commandos and the marines argue that a woman could not fulfil that role. Mrs Sirdar, 31, contended that the inter-operability principle was a fiction and that there were many marines who were not required to act as combat soldiers. The Equal Opportunities Commission, which backed her case, pro-

duced a male chef as a witness who was 20 stone in weight, who had failed eight physical examinations, and who had been in the marines for 20 years.

However, the tribunal ruled against Mrs Sirdar saying that cooks were indeed expected to retain a primary function as frontline troops. Only members of marine bands are exempted.

The European Court will be expected to decide on whether the "get-out" clause in British law, which allows the armed forces to reject women, should be repealed. The tribunal will then re-examine whether it was lawful to apply the principle of inter-operability to all chefs.

From today, a code of practice on pay issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission will be admissible as evidence in any proceedings under the Sex Discrimination Act. The code sets out methods which employers could use to review pay systems to ensure they are lawful and sets out means of identifying potential discrimination.

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news

Miracle of the fishes: How the food stores change frozen into 'fresh'

Ian Burrell

Fish which is being sold as "fresh" from the wet counters of supermarkets is often up to a fortnight old, according to new research.

Supermarkets are also confusing customers by freezing fish and defrosting it for sale on the fresh counter. The practice of "selling on the defrost" is becoming increasingly common among supermarkets as travellers from Britain's shrinking fishing fleet spend longer periods at sea to meet the growing public demand for fish.

Shoppers, who pay up to 40 per cent more for fish from the wet counter, are often unaware that the product was previously frozen and have no way of knowing when their "fresh" fish was caught. Some stores

said that rivals were failing to label defrosted fish.

The Fish Report, written by Ian Walsh, an independent consumer expert, was commissioned by Iceland Frozen Foods, which believes that fish sold as frozen has an unfair reputation for lack of taste and value. Its findings were "endorsed 100 per cent" at Steve Hatt, a leading fresh fishmonger in Islington, north London. Steve Hatt junior, the shop manager, said his customers were normally eating their fish within three days of it being caught and that the huge supermarket operations could not possibly match the freshness of fish sold in traditional high street fishmongers.

John Wood, senior fish technologist at Marks & Spencer, told the report: "Some people are selling 'on the defrost',

which means the fish was frozen but has been defrosted and goes on the counter to be sold as fresh."

Consumer groups said yesterday that many people buying their traditional Good Friday fish were being misled. Tim Lobstein, director of the Food Commission, said: "It's hard to see how fish that has been defrosted is offering additional value over the frozen alternative. I'm not sure shoppers understand exactly what they're being offered in every case. Some supermarkets must be making

a huge profit from this practice."

Terry Thresh, owner of the Boyd Line fishing company in Hull, said: "When you see the words 'fresh fish' it's a misnomer. Plenty of trips take 21 days now, if boats go to the Barents Sea, just above Norway. It takes four or five days to get there which means the fish that returns will vary in age but the oldest can be 15 days old. It's kept on ice, just above freezing, and it's completely edible, but it's hardly fresh fish."

He said: "I think that's too low and not good for the industry. In my view the inspection limit should be higher so that poor-quality fish is never sold."

supermarket buyers cannot be sure when the fish was caught. Andrew Pepper, a buyer for Tesco, said: "There is no way of telling the exact age of the fish. We have to trust their word."

Harry Davis, of the government's Central Science Laboratory, called for tougher restrictions at quayside, which currently allow inspectors to ban two-week-old fish from sale.

He said: "I think that's too low and not good for the industry. In my view the inspection limit should be higher so that poor-quality fish is never sold."

Churchman dies after paramilitary beating

David McKittrick
Ireland correspondent

A Belfast Presbyterian minister has died six weeks after suffering a savage "punishment beating" at the hands of loyalist paramilitants in the city.

The Rev David Templeton was attacked by three men armed with cudgels who broke into his north Belfast home on 7 February. He suffered two broken legs, a suspected fractured skull and puncture wounds in the incident. He had

appeared to be recovering but died in hospital on Monday night, possibly of a heart attack.

Although he had suffered previous health problems - he was the longest surviving kidney transplant recipient in Northern Ireland - police said his death

was a direct result of his injuries.

The motivation for the beating appears to relate to an incident 18 months ago when Mr Templeton was searched by customs officers as he returned from Amsterdam and was found to be carrying a porno-

graphic homosexual videotape.

No charges were brought but he resigned as minister of Greyabbey Presbyterian church in Donegal and moved to north Belfast where he lived quietly.

He had a distinguished academic record. Originally a civil servant, he gained an Open University degree and masters degrees from Queen's University, Belfast and Princeton theological seminary in New Jersey.

His presumed homosexuality would have represented sufficient reason for a loyalist attack. His was the latest of perhaps half a dozen punishment attacks which were apparently designed to injure him but over the years have proved lethal. Such attacks have become almost a matter of routine in Belfast and elsewhere,

though they are rarely fatal. According to the RUC, there have been so far this year 25 loyalist beatings, 14 loyalist shootings, and 33 republican beatings and one shooting. Last year, loyalists carried out 150 beatings and shootings while republicans perpetrated 170 beatings - a rate of almost one assault per day.

Meanwhile, Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Secretary, has been criticised for announcing that the inquiry into the IRA escape attempt from the Maze prison is to be confined to the Northern Ireland Office.

Up to 95 hardline IRA inmates could have escaped had their tunnel not been detected some 90 feet from the prison's perimeter fence. The inquiry is to be headed by a senior NIO

official, John Steele, who was previously in charge of prisons.

Finlay Spratt, of the Prison Officers Association, dismissed the inquiry as a whitewash, saying that while he did not question Mr Steele's integrity a full independent inquiry was needed.

He added: "I don't think he is the right man for the job. He was the head of the Prison Service before Alan Shannon, and some of the situation at the Maze emanates from when he was in control."

Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, described the inquiry as a sham. "This is a feeble and fumbling attempt to con the public into believing that something is being done when in effect it is a recipe for ensuring nothing will be done."

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Police call for curb on drivers' drug use

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Tough new laws to punish motorists who take any form of illegal drug and drive were called for by police chiefs yesterday.

Chief constables want to introduce a "zero limit" for drug users who drive. Anyone caught could face a ban, fine or imprisonment. The police want the new offence to cover all illegal drugs, from cannabis to heroin.

The initiative, by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo), follows estimates that more than 100,000 motorists a year may be driving while under the influence of illegal drugs. There is growing concern about the danger such motorists present to themselves and other road users.

Paul Manning, secretary of the Acpo traffic committee, and Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police, speaking at a conference on drug-driving in Lincoln, said: "Many of the attitudes and beliefs prevalent in the late Sixties, prior to the advent of the drink-drive legislation, are now being voiced in respect of drug-driving, the most worrying being that 'driving' does not affect my ability to drive or make judgements."

The dangers of drug-driving will need to be brought home to drivers in a powerful way if the problem is to be addressed by self discipline."

The Acpo drugs committee has recommended a new offence that would remove the need to prove impairment - which is currently needed for a prosecution - of a driver under the influence of drugs.

Mr Manning said that a new law making it an offence to drive with any detectable amount of illegal drug should be introduced. His committee and the Department of Transport are also searching for a roadside drugs kit that could be used to test motorists in a similar way as for alcohol. The DoT is already carrying out a three-year study to discover the number of drug-drivers on the road.

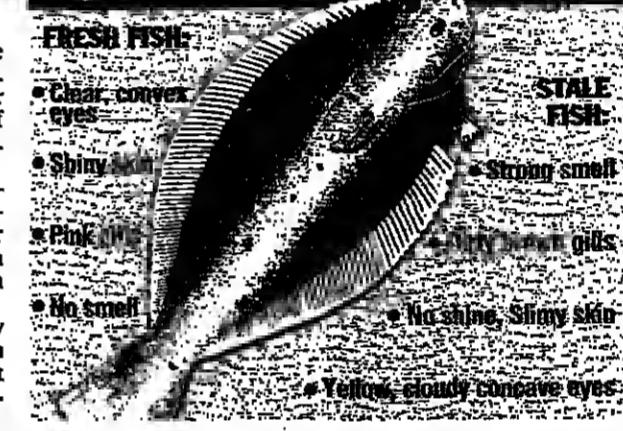
Mr Manning said that there could be more than 109,000 drug-driving cases a year, based on the findings of a Forensic Science Service study in 1993.

At the same conference the Royal Automobile Club reported that drivers taking tranquillisers were four times more likely to have a road accident and that taking tranquillisers can double the risks.

The figures are based on Canadian studies and are the latest figures to support the RAC's campaign to warn of the dangers of drug-driving.



The freshness test



Drinks guide bitter over tasteless theme pubs



Themed out: Filthy McNastie's Irish-style pub in Islington, north London, is a popular haunt for the drink as well as good food. Photograph: David Rose

Chains blamed for poor food and low-quality service

Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Theme pubs are destroying an important way of traditional British life with low-quality food and drink and production-line decor, according to a new survey.

In a stinging attack, *The Which? Guide to Country Pubs* published today warns that some of Britain's most attractive pubs are suffering as a result when they are bought up by chains. In some cases food quality had gone downhill since the pubs were taken over and in some cases it was "utterly dire," the guide said.

Typically, managers move into these pubs for a few weeks and then leave minors to take over with chefs who have no business using the title running the kitchen," said David Mabey, editor of the guide.

The guide also complained about bland and formulaic furnishings in such institutions.

"It seems to be almost compulso

lary to cover walls in fake collections and clutter culled from the pubbers' curiosity shop," said Mr Mabey. "It is a sad character-stifling exercise that appears to be designed to rip the heart and soul out of any decent hostility."

A spokesman for the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) said that while there was room for different types of pubs in the market "the problem is when someone thinks of a good idea, such as the Irish concept, everyone jumps on the bandwagon and there can be three or four of the same kind in the high street and there is a danger of saturation."

But Bob Cartwright, communications director for Bass Taverns which owns 87 O'Neills Irish-style pubs, strongly disagreed with the guide's findings.

"There is cracking service and very good food and a really good atmosphere. O'Neills is highly successful because it appeals to a broad section of people who might not normally go out to the pub," he said.

The guide also notes that landlords in the North are raising their glasses to the North-South divide after a new survey found that almost half the top-rated pubs were situated there.

There was a "distinct shift" in centre of excellence, with the North taking over from the West Country, which was criticised for bowing to the "perils of over-exposure, seasonal trade and a hefty dose of 'resting on laurels'."

In contrast, pubs in areas such as Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Midlands have done well this year with many more winning the coveted "two rosettes" award which indicates the quality of pub food is comparable to that in a serious restaurant.

Britons now munch their way through around £4bn worth of pub grub every year—spending as much on eating in pubs as they do in restaurants.

□ *The Which? Guide to Country Pubs* is published by Which? Ltd and can be ordered by calling 0800 252100; price £14.99, or it can be purchased from good bookshops.

Teachers face out bullies in the staffroom

Lucy Ward

Brow-beaten teachers are calling for help in the middle of the night after suffering at the hands of staff room bullies. Amid mounting evidence that "school rage" no longer confined to the playground, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers yesterday issued guidance to help victims stand up to their tormentors.

On the second day of its conference in Cardiff, the union heard that bullied teachers were reporting vicious campaigns of persistent undermining, intimidation and humiliation, usually waged by heads and senior managers.

The bullying can be physical, verbal, or non-verbal, and might include ostracising, setting impossible objectives, unreasonable allocation of duties, or even inappropriate eye contact, according to the new guidance.

Teachers falling victim to such behaviour could, in extreme cases, develop school phobia, and fear going to work to face threatening colleagues. They might also suffer a loss of confidence in their professional abilities and become reluctant to voice opinions to managers.

The worst culprits were

head teachers and senior school managers who abused their power, often because they were under pressure, but bullying tactics were also used by classroom teachers, governors, parents and non-teaching staff.

Belinda Hall, who runs the ATI's stress helpline, said the number of bullying-related calls had increased to one new case every working day.

Peter Smith, the union's general secretary, denied that it was launching a "get head teachers" campaign. He said that its guidelines would give teachers "valuable weapons to identify and combat adult bullying in their schools and colleges."

The guidance identifies eight common types of bullies and the tactics used. Among them are "the refrigerator" who freeze out exceptional teachers in favour of poorer less threatening colleagues, and "the allocator" who singles out staff unfairly by allocating them the worse jobs.

"Changelings" are sly managers who fail to treat their staff consistently, fairly and equally, leaving them unsure where they stand, while "proceduralists" are head teachers and department heads who abide by school rules exhaustively and very slowly to undermine morale.

DAILY POEM

High Time

By Heinrich Heine

It really is time I had the sense
To give up this endless morose
Play-acting. I just can't go on
Being so histrionic.

The glorious backcloth was always daubed
In the high-Romantic fashion.
My knightly mantle shone like gold,
I felt the most exquisite passion.

Yet now that my melodramatic streak
Has been seen through with suitable culling,
I feel as miserable as before.
As if the old play were still running.

O God! unknowing and in jest
I spoke my genuine feeling.
There was death in my breast when I merely thought
I was making a death-scene appealing.

The new Everyman's Poetry selection of Heinrich Heine's verse is translated and edited by David Cram and T.J. Reed (Everyman/M Dent, £2). The bicentenary of the poet's birth (as Harry Heine, to a Jewish family in Dusseldorf) falls on 13 December this year.

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Bullet train claims new speed record

Richard Lloyd Parry
Tokyo

As well as being the fastest, the Japanese bullet train is the oldest, the most efficient, and surely the best-equipped high-speed train in the world.

If I were an executive, with meetings to hold, managing directors to schmooze with, big transactions to direct, and expensive dinners to reserve, all could be easily accomplished on the bullet train.

If I were a nursing mother, I could feed the baby, change its nappy, and dress for dinner in secure privacy. For a wheelchair-bound passenger, there would be no problem – as well as private-meeting facilities, long-distance phones, digital financial news, and ladies powder-rooms, the Max *Yamabiko* bullet train on which I travelled from Tokyo to the northern city of Morioka has a lift for disabled passengers. *Yamabiko* means "Echo" (bullet trains all bear faintly poetic names). Max stands for Multi-Ability express, and all it lacks is a barbershop and multi-gym.

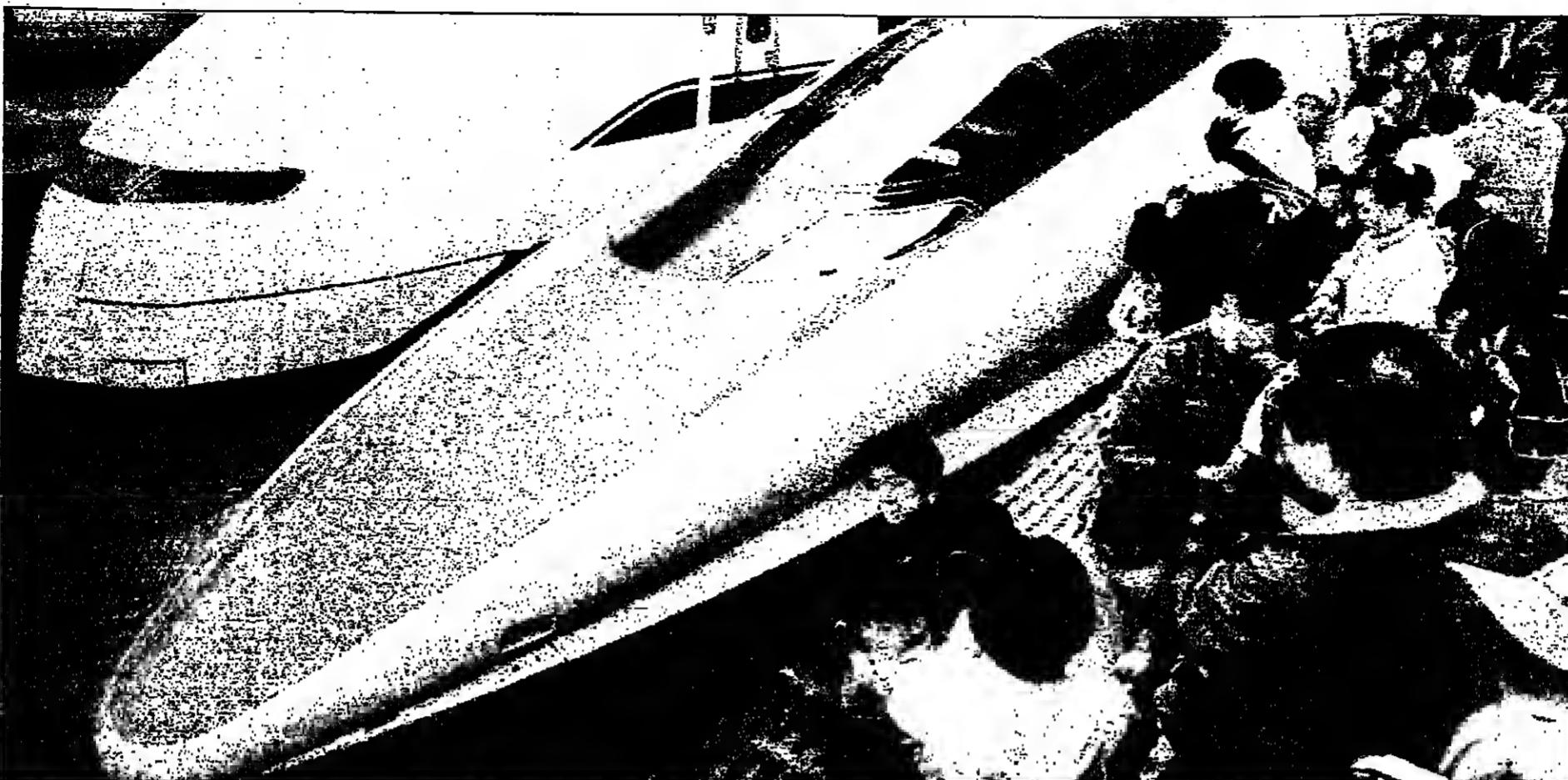
Sinking back into my deep-pile seat on the top floor of the double-decker carriage as rice fields whipped by at 140mph, I was filled with intoxicating feelings of urgency and mission.

Japan, scattered over four main islands, is 1,200 miles from end to end, but the brilliance and efficiency of its trains make it feel like a small and compact country. This week, it became smaller still with the opening of the latest extension to the *shinkansen* (which means simply "new express line"), to the northern city of Akita.

Once transport to the airport and check-times have been taken into account, it is slightly quicker to get from Tokyo to many Japanese cities by rail.

A German teacher, Jobst-Matthias Spannagel, came to Japan last month to set a world record for the number of rail miles travelled in a single day – 2,607 on five separate journeys. All these feats are made possible by the bullet train.

Though synonymous with high-speed travel, the bullet train had lost ground to the



Transport of delight: The latest Nozomi train being wheeled out in Hiroshima before going into service, during which it outperformed the French TGV

Photograph: Reuters

French TGV, which holds the current official record for average speed between two stations of 157mph, achieved between Paris and St Pierre des Corps. In a bid to regain the lead, the Japanese introduced the Nozomi line in 1992, and on Saturday, the Nozomi-503, equipped with a long-nose lead carriage and new sound-proofing for a faster, quieter ride, smashed through the record.

Carrying 1,300 passengers in 16 carriages from Osaka to Fukuoka, it hit speeds of up to 300kph (186mph) and sustained an average speed of 261.8kph (163mph) between stops in Hiroshima and Kokura, on the southern island of Kyushu. Its owners, the West Japan Railway Company, have applied to the

Guinness Book of World Records for official recognition. It was an important recovery of image. No other high-speed train has become such an institution or played such a symbolic part in a nation's development. The *shinkansen* was built for the Tokyo Olympics in the pivotal year of 1964. The spectacle of the bullet train, scything through the countryside with Mt Fuji in the background, became an instant and memorable national image. Along with the 16 gold medals won in the Games by Japanese athletes, it marked an important moment in the country's growing self-confidence and rehabilitation.

Since then, the bullet train has embodied the best and worst about Japan. During the 1970s it became a byword for corruption, thanks to Kakuei Tanaka, Japan's most notorious prime minister, who eventually came to a sticky end after the Lockheed bribery scandal.

Tanaka came from Niigata, a busy, but not especially significant port on Japan's north-west coast. Like all good Japanese politicians, he depended for his grass-roots support on local businessmen who bankrolled his political activities in return for juicy public-works projects awarded from Tokyo. To the delight of his constituents, Tanaka presented them with the greatest prize of all – their own *shinkansen* line, linking obscure Niigata with Tokyo Central.

Never mind that there were far more worthy candidates for this honour, never mind the environmental impact of the project on the beautiful Japan Alps through which the line was bored. Tanaka was looking after his own (with undoubted financial benefits to himself) and, even after his criminal

conviction, the late prime minister is remembered in Niigata as a hero.

Bullet train-spotting is a complicated business these days – in the 32 years since its debut,

the original design has been improved and modified in a hasty quest for greater speed and volume. The Nozomis do not in fact look like bullets, but have tapering wedge-shaped aero-

dynamic noses, designed to reduce wind resistance and (the *shinkansen*'s besetting problem) noise pollution.

Tests are already being carried out on the maglev, an

amazing vehicle which levitates above its rails on a magnetic cushion, and may one day carry passengers as fast as 300mph.

This summer, the Fujita Corporation began tests in models

of the ultimate bullet train – the geoplane, a winged cigar tube which will take off from its rails to fly through tunnels between Tokyo and Osaka at 370mph.

But after the initial excitement has worn off, travelling by *shinkansen* is a curiously empty experience.

The Max *Yamabiko* is the QE2 of bullet trains, a cruise liner on rails capable of carrying 1,225 people in its 12 amenity-rich double-decker carriages.

At full tilt, it can reach 150 mph, but even close to that there is no sensation of speed. The most dramatic place to witness the bullet train is from outside, standing on the platform as a non-stop express passes through the station, a minor earthquake of tremors and back-draught.

From the inside, the only sound to punctuate its noiseless glide is the whirr of the air conditioner; there is no clack-clack or Chattanooga-choo-choo, and the views which whip by through the thick and even glass have the unreality of images on a television screen.

Passengers do not talk to each other. With its howling stewardesses and their drinks trolleys, the magazines in the seat backs, and the womb-like, squeaky-clean toilets, the *shinkansen* has more in common with Concord than the *Flying Scotsman*.

Perhaps this is the *shinkansen*'s most remarkable achievement: that after 150 years of smoke, noise, smells, and discomfort, it has succeeded in taking the romance out of the railway.

On track for a record

- On Saturday the Nozomi-503 hit an average speed of 188mph between Hiroshima and Kokura.
- The current official record holder, the French Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV), reaches an average speed of 167mph between Paris and St Pierre des Corps.
- The Nozomi also matched the top speed reached by the TGV, 187mph.
- The Eurostar from London to Paris reaches 186mph for most of its journey on the French side of the Channel.
- The fastest speed recorded by a national rail system is 320.2mph by a TGV between Courbevoie and Tokai in May 1990.
- The earliest speed record was achieved by Stephenson's Rocket on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway when it ran at 29.2mph on 2 October, 1829.
- The Mallard was the fastest steam locomotive, reaching a speed of 128mph between Grantham and Peterborough in July 1938.
- On 30 November, 1934, the Flying Scotsman hit 100mph for 500 yards between Grantham and Peterborough – although an unauthorised train driver said it reached no more than 98mph.
- The first regular scheduled service to hit speeds of more than 100mph was the Japanese *shinkansen* line. The service, introduced in 1964, took passengers from Tokyo to Osaka at an average speed of 103.3mph and a maximum speed of 130mph.

Pirate seizes Italy's unguarded airwaves

Andrew Gumbel
Rome



Bossi: Independence begins at last on 14 September

A pirate is at large in northern Italy. No, he is not menacing ships on the high seas, nor is he roaming the majestic old port of Venice. This is a pirate with an acute sense of the media-obsessed times, and he is striking at the state where it hurts most – right in the middle of the main evening news.

Three times in the last week, viewers in the north-eastern Veneto region have been blasted with several minutes of secessionist propaganda during the eight o'clock bulletin on the flagship state channel RAI Uno.

Each time, the sound has gone dead and a man calling himself the Pirate Doge has railed against the "rotten and corrupt" Italian state, urging his "indomitable fellow patriots of the Veneto" to rise up in revolt against the colonialist government of Rome.

It happened first in Venice, then in Treviso, then in Verona. Each time, the saboteurs have hijacked a state broadcasting transmitter, apparently without difficulty and with increasing impunity. The news from Albania and Israel has been drowned out by a call to join an independence demonstration in Venice on 12 May, the 200th anniversary of the fall of the Venetian Republic. This was the moment in history, according to local secessionists, when the Veneto's enslavement by outside occupiers began.

All of this smacks of the colourful agitprop of Umberto Bossi, leader of the Northern League and godfather of Padania, the hitherto mythical new country made up of the richest of Italy's northern regions. It has Mr Bossi's love of defiance and his perverse sense of humour.

But Mr Bossi himself may not actually be behind the stunt. Instead, what we could be seeing is a new frontier in northern secessionism – the quite distinct secessionist aspirations of the Veneto region.

The Veneto is where the League movement began in the late-1970s, and it has become the most radical region by far in its hatred of government, and especially of taxation, imposed by Rome.

The protest has particular poignancy, since the Italian government is about to embark on its umpteenth round of budget austerity to try to qualify for

European Monetary Union on the first go. The separatist message is simple: why should we fork out more taxes and sacrifice our welfare provisions when in the north are ready to join Europe but the south is not?

The television pirate is not the only one trumpeting this message. Mr Bossi was in fine form at a rally in Milan over the weekend, describing Italy as a fascist, colonialist state and promising independence for Padania on 14 September 14.

"The government of Padania will have to decide... if the people of the north will march with submachine guns slung over their shoulders," he warned in provocative fashion.

"We are decent people, but please, my Roman friends, don't piss around with us any more."

The judiciary, meanwhile, is taking a renewed interest in Mr Bossi's friends, and the Pirate Doge in particular. Magistrates have opened four separate investigations into the intercepted news broadcasts, one for each of the incidents and an extra one, for good measure, into the phenomenon of "instigation to subvert the unity of the Italian state".

Mainstream politicians in the north have warned that the Pirate Doge is not an isolated phenomenon, and is likely to strike again at any time.

Padua and Bergamo are top of the guess-list for his next target. Curious viewers simply have to tune in and wait for the show to roll on.

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Hong Kong handover

Colony threatens Gore's fragile friendship

Teresa Poole
Peking

As far as China's prime minister, Li Peng, was concerned yesterday, Taiwan was the central issue with the utmost importance and sensitivity in Sino-United States relations. But in the immediate future it is Hong Kong which could disrupt the fragile improvement in relations between Washington and Peking, sealed this week by the arrival of Vice-President Al Gore, the highest level American official to visit China since the 1989 Tiananmen killings.

Mr Gore met Mr Li yesterday for talks which both men sought to present as constructive and amiable. Nei-

ther human rights nor the controversy surrounding alleged Chinese political donations in the US was permitted to cloud the occasion.

Mr Gore said his meetings had been "very positive". According to the Chinese, the Vice-President had prepared well for his first trip to the Middle Kingdom by reading "quite a lot of books" about Chinese culture and history; as proof, Mr Gore quoted an old Chinese saying that "seeing once is better than hearing 100 times".

Mr Li told Mr Gore that China was "fully confident on the smooth transfer and the stability and prosperity" of Hong Kong after sovereignty reverted to China on 1 July. Earlier this month, US Congressmen

voted 416-1 for a bill which has infuriated China because it calls for trade sanctions if the US administration decides that Peking has broken its pledges of a high degree of autonomy for the former British colony after the handover.

Yesterday, Mr Gore stressed to Mr Li that "preserving Hong Kong's economic vigour and long-term prosperity and stability was very important for the whole world". Formal agreement was reached yesterday for the US to maintain a consulate in Hong Kong after 1 July.

The potential for the Hong Kong issue to undermine Sino-US relations this year was emphasised yesterday by Joseph Nye, the former US as-

sistant secretary of defense, who was on a separate visit to Peking.

"There will be many in the [US] Congress who may find the smallest incidents after the turnover of Hong Kong as grounds to try to bring about a problem in US-China relations. This is certainly a real possibility," Mr Nye said. Peking should be careful "not to take actions, particularly actions after the reversion of Hong Kong, which would feed into those who wish to vilify China", added Mr Nye, who is now Dean of the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. It was "critical" that China abided by its "one country, two systems" principle for governing the territory.

After meetings with senior government and military officials, Mr Nye said he had been "pleasantly surprised by the sophistication of the answers ... particularly on Hong Kong ... Now whether they will be able to follow through on that in the heat of the moment, when somebody chains themselves to the fence outside Government House, and the TV cameras all carry that as if it is the major event in Hong Kong, I don't know."

One possible threat to Hong Kong's future under Chinese rule is the politicisation of trade and business, an issue which came to the fore in Peking yesterday. Fighting shy of any role as a dealmaker, Mr Gore's publicly issued itinerary made no

mention of any contract signings by US companies, even though these normally take centre-stage during such visits.

In the end, however, he and Mr Li duly presided as Boeing and General Motors closed much-delayed contracts. Boeing has sold five 777-200 jets, worth \$685m (£425m), to Air China, while General Motors sealed a \$1.57bn joint venture in Shanghai to make sedans.

Ronald Woodward, president of Boeing's Commercial Airplane Group, said both sides reached basic agreement a year ago, but signing was delayed. "There is no doubt the contract was not executed when it was ready because of tension between the US and China last year and the year before," he said. "There are times when politics are involved."

John Smith, chairman of General Motors, said Mr Gore's trip had provided a "catalyst" for his signing.

The Vice-President's visit, paving the way for a Sino-US presidential summit later this year, is a key test for the US administration's defending its policy of "constructive engagement" with China.

Mr Nye firmly backed this approach. "If the alternative is to follow a pre-emptive containment policy, I know the outcome, and I would submit that a Cold War in Asia would be a costly event for all of us, and not necessary," he said.

Deposed reformist shows first signs of a comeback

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Communist Party leader deposed during the 1989 democracy protests, appears to be taking the first steps towards a political comeback, according to reports in a Hong Kong newspaper.

Yesterday's *Hong Kong Standard* states that Mr Zhao arrived in Shanghai, China's biggest city, over the weekend in a special train with "several members of his personal entourage and more than a dozen security personnel". The report quotes witnesses as saying that security was as tight as that provided for state leaders.

It is not clear what Mr Zhao is doing in Shanghai. He is said not to be meeting senior officials but to be having discussions with more junior cadres alongside visits to state-run companies to study how they are coming to terms with China's economic reform programme.

Mr Zhao was forced out of office after showing sympathy for the democracy protesters and arguing against the hardline which lead to the Tiananmen Square massacre. In 1987 he was hand-picked by the late Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader, as the nation's new leader.

Deng shared Mr Zhao's en-



1961: Zhao Ziyang with Deng Xiaoping. Photograph: Magnum

tracking on economic reform and raising the delicate subject of the Tiananmen massacre. Like a number of other influential Chinese personalities, Mr Zhao is calling for a reassessment of the 1989 crackdown.

It is hard to believe that Mr Jiang would allow such an unrepentant critic to return to the fold. However, the President is facing more overt criticism from leftist hardliners and may feel the need to make a gesture to Mr Zhao as a way of keeping the Communist Party's reformist wing outside.

Zhao Ziyang is hardly the liberal politician he is fondly imagined to be by some Western politicians but for the past decade he has been the most articulate and forceful advocate of reform within the Communist context. Like Deng Xiaoping, who suffered exile for being a reformist during the Cultural Revolution, Mr Zhao may yet emerge as a rallying point for reformists in the new era.

As ever the bulk of the information about the power struggle in Peking is percolating through to Hong Kong which, for the time being, retains its position as the main source of "unofficial" information about Chinese affairs.

Whether this will continue after 1 July, when China resumes sovereignty, is in question.



Growing up: A man meeting his daughter outside a school in Hong Kong. Many parents are against their children receiving sex education at an early age. Photograph: Tom Pilston

Sexual taboos break into the classroom

Stephen Vines

The "taboo" subjects of " masturbation, homosexuality, pre-marital sex and sexual harassment etc" are to be broached in Hong Kong's secondary schools if government proposals are accepted. In addition, for the first time, sex education will appear on the curriculum for kindergartens and primary schools.

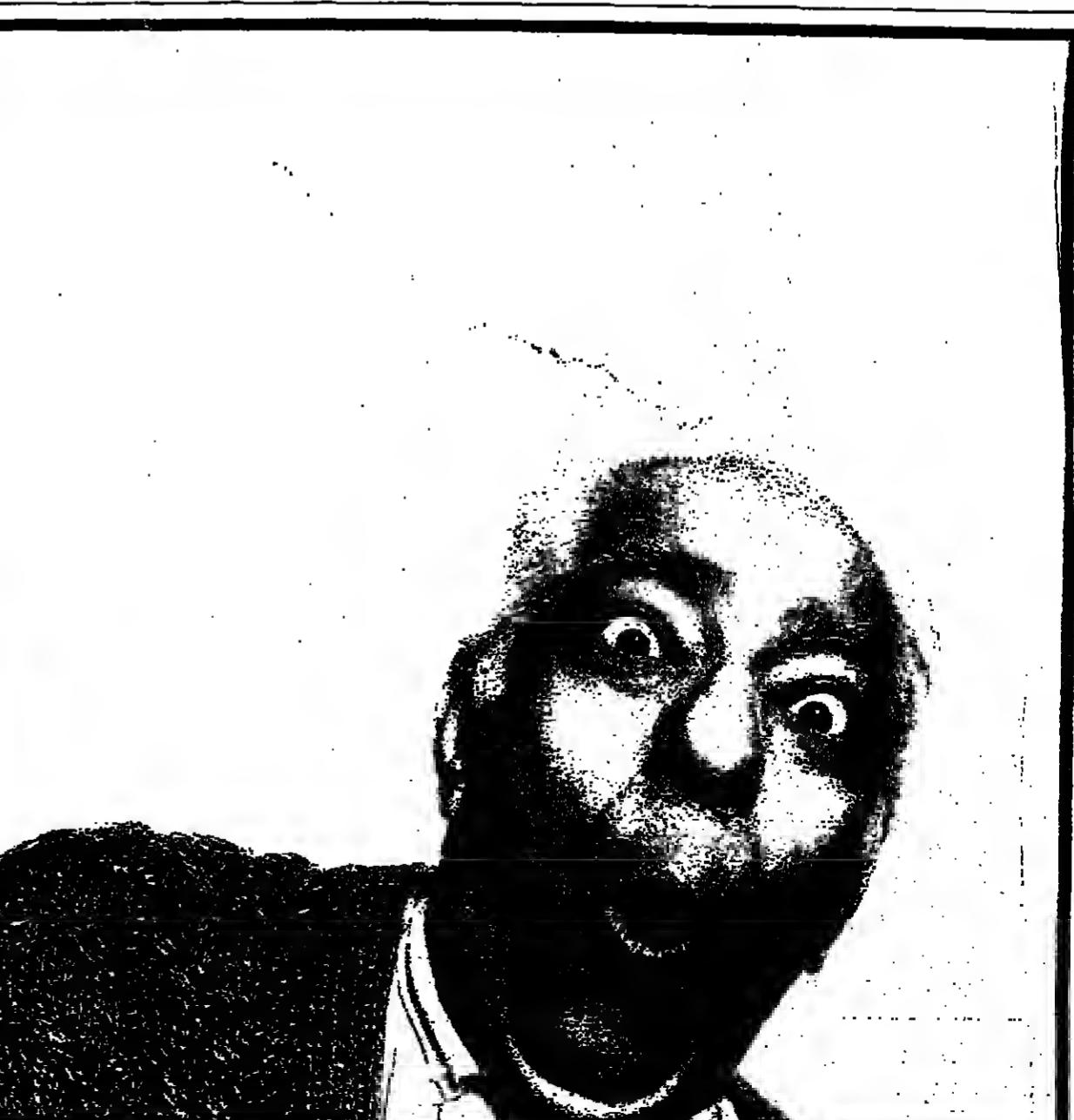
Yesterday the colony's administration issued new guidelines on sex education. Julian Leung, assistant director of education, said revisions were necessary "in view of the social changes over the past 10 years". The government was trying to help teachers equip students with "the attitudes, values and knowledge necessary for solving sex tensions".

The guidelines also provide for education on AIDS an an "emphasis on the clarification of values, positive self-esteem, and concepts of marriage and family". Hong Kong schools are not known as centres of enlightenment, particularly when it comes to sex education. Surveys taken among young people have shown a high level of ignorance about sex.

The proposed guidelines are expected to be opposed by teachers reluctant to teach about sex and parents who seem to believe their children should not have access to sexual information at an early age.

Evidence suggests sex education is badly needed in Hong Kong. A survey by a group concerned about proliferation of pornography found that over a quarter of boys questioned said they would commit rape if this did not mean going to jail.

Last year a consultation exercise on sexual discrimination found 53 per cent of those questioned would not allow homosexual into their homes, 7 per cent would not stay in the same hotel as a homosexual, bi-sexual and one in five people stated they would not shake hands with a gay person.



The battle for history: Struggle to rewrite the past puts classrooms and textbooks in the frontline

Truth goes to the wall as German right makes a final stand for Hitler's army

Inre Karacs

Dachau

They are re-enacting the Second World War in Bavaria's green fields. The outcome will doubtless still be the same as 52 years ago, except that this time the home side has high hopes of scoring a moral victory.

Apart from one street-skirmish in Munich, little blood has been shed so far, but truth has already become a casualty. A motley collection of conservatives, opportunists and neo-Nazis is trying to convince Germans that Hitler's regular army has had a bad press. The Wehrmacht, they claim, had virtually nothing to do with the extermination of Jews and the mass murder of civilians.

Evidence to the contrary, as displayed in an exhibition in Munich about the "Crimes of the Wehrmacht", is concocted by Communist provocateurs, they charge. The "slanderers" are now being exposed by Bavaria's right-wing government and young minds are about to be cleansed of this filthy propaganda.

In the latest row about the exhibition, which has already been shown in 15 other German and Austrian cities without much fuss, Bavaria's culture minister, Hans Zehetmair, has taken aim at history lessons. Teachers, he suggested, should not cloud the pupils' vision with images of Wehrmacht officers executing civilians in occupied countries.

Teachers and pupils must be very confused, for the history textbooks approved by the very same culture minister are replete with the sort of pictures now hanging in Munich's town hall. Bavaria's conservatives are two decades out of sync.

For 30 years after '45 the general view was that the Wehrmacht were clean," says Karl Brückmayer, history teacher at Dachau's Josef Efler grammar school, a honey-comb-shaped architectural wonder less than a mile from Germany's Berliner monument. "But since the Sevowitz, the Wehrmacht's role in the Final Solution has been explored."

Mr Brückmayer flicks through the books, revealing harrowing photographs of death camps and chapters of dense text on genocide.



German soldiers march into the Rhineland: Since the 1970s, historians have confirmed that the regular army played a key role in the mass extermination of Jews and civilians

You could not come away from it with the naive belief that the Nazis' crimes were perpetrated only by a few. Just in case the pupils do not get the point, there are field trips for the senior grades to the former concentration camp, and classroom discussions with Dachau survivors about the Holocaust.

This year, the 10th grade - 18-year-olds - also paid a visit to the Munich exhibition. They enjoyed what they saw, insofar as one can enjoy such a outing, but profess not to have

learnt much from it. "What we saw we knew already," one of them commented.

Perhaps coming from this infamous town on the outskirts of Munich has made them more knowledgeable than their contemporaries? "It's true that living here, you get a slightly different perspective," Manuela Winkler, one of the 18-year-olds, says. But, judging from the fleet of school buses which crowd the memorial's car park, the locals are not alone in their inquisitiveness.

Tens of thousands of children have been to the Munich exhibition, which has broken all attendance records. The teachers' trade union reports an upsurge of interest to the period across Bavaria and the teachers themselves say they can barely keep up with their pupils' insatiable hunger for the grisly details.

Many youngsters may well be doing for their final year history projects what Manuela has in mind: interviewing people in her village near Dachau about what they did during the war.

A lot of people will get hurt in this process; a lot of God-fearing Catholic folk who have always voted for Bavaria's eternal ruling party, the Christian Social Union. And not just for us or soldiers.

"If we look at the army's role, then we have to look at the role of doctors in this town, because Dachau was an extermination camp for handicapped people," says Mr Brückmayer. "And if we look at doctors, then we have to look at the legal profession, who form the bedrock of the party's support will be next in the firing line.

The strategy will not pay off

in the long term. The voters the CSU tries to protect are defecting to the Grim Reaper, and there are not enough hard-right Bavarians to replace them. The big cities, including Munich, are already in the hands of the Social Democrats and Greens, and the party is set to lose its absolute majority in the regional parliament next year.

The Wehrmacht exhibition, which Germany's most right-wing governing party tried to obliterate, may prove to be the conservatives' Stalingrad.

Racism still on reading list for SA children

Adrian Hadland

Three years after Nelson Mandela became president, many South African children are still being taught history from outdated, often racist, textbooks which most educationalists agree should be in the bin rather than in school satchels.

"Lots and lots of them need to be got rid of," said Orenna Krut, a manager with one of the country's largest educational publishers, Maskew Miller Longman.

Until recently the freedom of Afrikaner publishing houses, the bulk of South Africa's history textbooks are full of the eurocentric emphasis and historical distortions once considered necessary to sustain and legitimise Apartheid.

But rather than throw the books out, teachers and parents have little option other than to continue using them, for some age groups, until beyond the turn of the century.

While preparations are well underway for the introduction of a new school programme, called "Curriculum 2005", the anticipated change in teaching methods and materials will take many years.

At a function in Cape Town on Monday, South Africa's education minister, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, formally received the official report on Curriculum 2005 from his technical advisory committee. According to Sheila Sisulu, an adviser to Bengu, the programme hopes to wean students from a textbook-dependent approach to education and encourage the use of multi-media resources. The textbooks that are used will be new or rewritten to give a more balanced view of South Africa's past.

Once approved, the new syllabus will be overhauled from next year, two school years at a time, and is scheduled to take until the end of 2004. Delays in defining the curriculum have, however, made it difficult for educational publishers to prepare appropriate texts in time.

"The learning programmes for next year are still not available and it's March already. It is physically not possible for us to wait... Publishers are just trying to guess and do the best we can," Ms Krut said.

In the process of rewriting history, though, dangers lurk in the temptation to produce a "victor's history" as distorted one way as the previous ones were the other, according to one historian engaged in writing the new textbooks. "The temptation to glorify the struggle is bound to have an effect on history writing, replacing an Afrikaner nationalist text with a liberation movement narrative," the historian said.

The new curriculum is scheduled to be introduced in February next year.

Schoolbooks slow to admit Japan's shame

Richard Lloyd Parry

Tokyo

Question: when is a forcibly recruited military sex slave, not a forcibly recruited military sex slave? Answer: when she is a "comfort woman". What is the correct term for the dispatch of armed peace-keeping forces abroad? An "assignment". What do you call it when thousands of Japanese troops invade Manchuria? An "advance". What is the source of this cant, euphemism and evasiveness? Answer: Japan's school history text books.

and in many ways today's history books are strikingly frank. Gone are the days when the invasion of Manchuria was euphemised as "an advance", and several of the texts make no bones about the Imperial Army's less glorious moments. "In Nanjing, the army massacred large numbers of Chinese people, including not only prisoners of war, but women and children," says one. "The deprivation of food created hardship for the people under Japanese occupation."

This year, a smouldering controversy has flared up over the inclusion,

for the first time, of references to the "comfort women", the Indonesian, Filipina and Korean sex slaves who were organised in front-line brothels for the use of the Imperial Army.

One hundred and sixteen conservative politicians have formed a cross-party parliamentary group objecting to what they call a "mischievous" emphasis on shameful aspects of Japan's history, although the references in several of the books are so brief as to be almost meaningless. One publisher records that the government "forced women to go with the army as 'comfort women'" and treated them badly". The "comfort" which the women dispensed, and the details of their "bad" treatment are not explained.

But the education ministry reserves its most vigilant policing for active politicians have formed a cross-party parliamentary group objecting to what they call a "mischievous" emphasis on shameful aspects of Japan's history, although the references in several of the books are so brief as to be almost meaningless. One publisher records that the government "forced women to go with the army as 'comfort women'" and treated them badly". The "comfort" which the women dispensed, and the details of their "bad" treatment are not explained.

When one made reference to the controversial "dispatch" of SDF troops on overseas peace-keeping operations, it was forced to adopt the less-militaristic sounding "assignment" instead. A sentence observing that the SDF has "grown into a new Japanese military force" was rewritten. Rather, the ministry insisted, the SDF "has grown identical to military forces in terms of capabilities".



According to Performance Car magazine
Fiesta is "a hoot to drive."

The EU must now turn towards the east

There was a certain lack of confidence about yesterday's celebrations in Rome of the 40th anniversary of the treaties that gave birth to the European Union.

Despite the EU's manifest achievements in consolidating peace and prosperity across half of Europe, the self-congratulations sounded less convincing than the self-doubts. For perhaps the first time in its history, the EU seems to be in need of a fresh vision, a rejuvenated sense of purpose, a boldness and creativity of spirit of the kind which inspired its formation in 1957.

Part of the explanation for the mood of self-critical introspection lies in the awareness that on several important policy fronts the EU has not come up to scratch in recent years. Mass unemployment and low growth are the norm in most member-states, and the best brains in the EU seem to be unable to 'crack the problem'. The economic future seems to lie not just with East Asia, as predicted for so long, but also with reinvigorated United States, whose job creation rate is much superior to the EU's.

In terms of forging an effective common foreign and security policy, too, the EU has fallen short of its own aspirations. Time and again it has been hobbled by its internal divisions – towards former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Albania and Turkey, to

name just four recent problems. Even the increased use of majority voting in foreign policy matters, which is under discussion at the EU's conference on revising the Maastricht treaty, seems unlikely to do more than improve cooperation on relatively marginal issues.

Yet the most fundamental problem confronting the EU is not the failure of specific institutions or policies. It is the persistent lack of clarity about what should constitute the mission and identity of Europe in an age freed of the great ideological dispute between liberal market democracy and Communism. Within our grasp we have the prospect of a free, undivided, democratic Europe, and yet the EU seems uncertain both about its role in building that Europe, and about which countries should be part of it.

For sure, the EU is committed to eventually absorbing at least 10 former Communist countries – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the three Baltic states. Yet sometimes the EU seems scared of the implications of this proposed expansion. The countries that benefit most from the Common Agricultural Policy and which lap up the EU's structural funds (transfers of money from rich member-states to poor) seem to be in no hurry to let less well-off central and eastern Europeans feed at the same trough.

Others, at Brussels and inside cer-

tain national governments, grumble that the early admission of the former Communist countries will dilute the EU too much, preventing the emergence of a European political union. Hence, in their eyes, the paramount importance of launching the single currency on schedule in January 1999. Any delay in that project, and it is virtually certain that a coalition of states would emerge with the aim of postponing next year's membership negotiations for some or all of the central and eastern Europeans.

This would be a terrible tragedy, a victory for narrow-mindedness over

imagination and courage. If the EU needs a goal to motivate it in coming years, surely no cause could be more deserving of sustained support than the unification of eastern and western Europe in democracy and peace, the planting and nurturing of prosperity in the east, the healing of ethnic minority conflicts and border disputes – in short, the whole-hearted embrace of an opportunity that has never before arisen in European history?

No less important is the need to clear up misunderstandings about where Europe's borders begin and end. Of crucial significance in this

regard is the position of Turkey, which some EU states want to exclude for ever, but to which Britain and France in particular want to hold open the prospect of membership.

This issue has not only split the EU down the middle, but has also caused a needless dispute with the US, which sees Turkish association with Europe as an essential anchor of its pro-American regional security role.

Given its population of 62 million, its economic underdevelopment, its Kurdish civil war and its problematic record on human rights and military involvement in politics, it is hard to see how Turkey could join the EU as of today. Yet the argument of some EU states – that, as an Islamic country, Turkey can never be part of Europe – is fatuous, ignores the similarities between Turkey and Muslim-populated EU countries, and contradicts the liberal values that the EU should be upholding.

Now of all times is not the moment for the EU to retreat into its shell. It needs to take on challenges, not shy away from them. The turmoil in Albania cried out for energetic EU engagement, not a response that amounted to throwing up the drawbridge and letting Albanians drown in the suffering of an unwanted corner of Europe.

Last June the Czech President, Vaclav Havel, called on Europe 'to

rediscover, consciously embrace and in some way articulate its soul'. The EU can do these things and, in the process, regain its confidence and redefine its identity. Its mission lies in central and eastern Europe, where with determination, imagination and generosity, it will achieve results every bit as laudable as those it secured in western Europe after 1957.

No smoke without votes

So now we know. Tony Blair has never sniffed, puffed, popped, piped or otherwise ingested or inhaled any illegal substance ever in his life. The truth is, we knew that anyway – because if he had done, we can be sure his living room would be a great deal more psycho-delicately intriguing than it is. But what does his refusal of drugs (since he must many times have been invited to use them during his long-haired, guitar-strumming student days) say about the man? And how will his behaviour play among voters? No doubt decent upstanding Britons, particularly parents, will applaud his firm stand. What young people think may be something else. But then, the worrying thing about them is how many seem disinclined to vote altogether.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It's people the Tories dump on the streets

Sir: I feel compelled to add a few instances to the long and deeply moving letter from Graham and Eleanor Wright (24 March), contrasting today's world with pre-Conservative union troubles.

Today the "piles of rotting rubbish" that one trips over in the street consist merely of discarded people, not (as then) of household waste. (To be fair, the household waste did not ask us for money.)

London Transport will not be clear whether the Wrights' claim that "state monopolies have crumbled" alludes to the physical state of the system or to the fact that disruption of service is no longer a trades-union monopoly but has been made "stable and competent" on a daily basis in the good cause of keeping the "lowest basic fare rate" down.

C CURRIE

London N17

Sir: Graham and Eleanor Wright recall some events of the Seventies that happened under a Labour government. I can recall other images of that decade: strikes and power cuts, three-day working weeks, statutory pay freeze, rising unemployment, rising inflation.

All these happened in the Seventies, but under a Conservative government. Since then the world economy and the Tories have changed. It is sensible to assume that Labour has changed also.

TONY WALLIS
Castleford, West Yorkshire

Sir: Paul Valley ("Hidden virtues of loser-friendly Liverpool", 11 March) prides himself after those bygone days of communal solidarity which he believes to be manifested in the current "struggle" of the Liverpool dockers. If only such social cohesion pervaded the whole of society, then what benefits could be derived by this selfless devotion to the common cause, suggests Mr Valley.

But there is a downside to such "solidarity". The worst consequences of such "social cohesion" were demonstrated in the world between 1939 and 1945 – hence Western society's canonisation ever since of the individual and individual rights. The more the individuals in such a group identify with each other, the more they identify non-members of the group as "outsiders", different, inferior.

Every "noble" act of the dismissed Liverpool dockers perceived by national journalists and local clergy alike, is matched by some offence inflicted on the "non-believers". Hence the working docker is a "scab" to be targeted for ruthless persecution; whose house is fair game for vandalism and arson; whose wife and daughter are threatened with having acid thrown in their faces; whose right to follow a different route to the group does not exist.

Social cohesion and solidarity can be attractive notions to the Western mentality – especially to those in nostalgic mood. The dark side is less appealing. Those who choose to write about it should reflect both sides of the picture. Those of us who are the "outsiders" deserve that much.

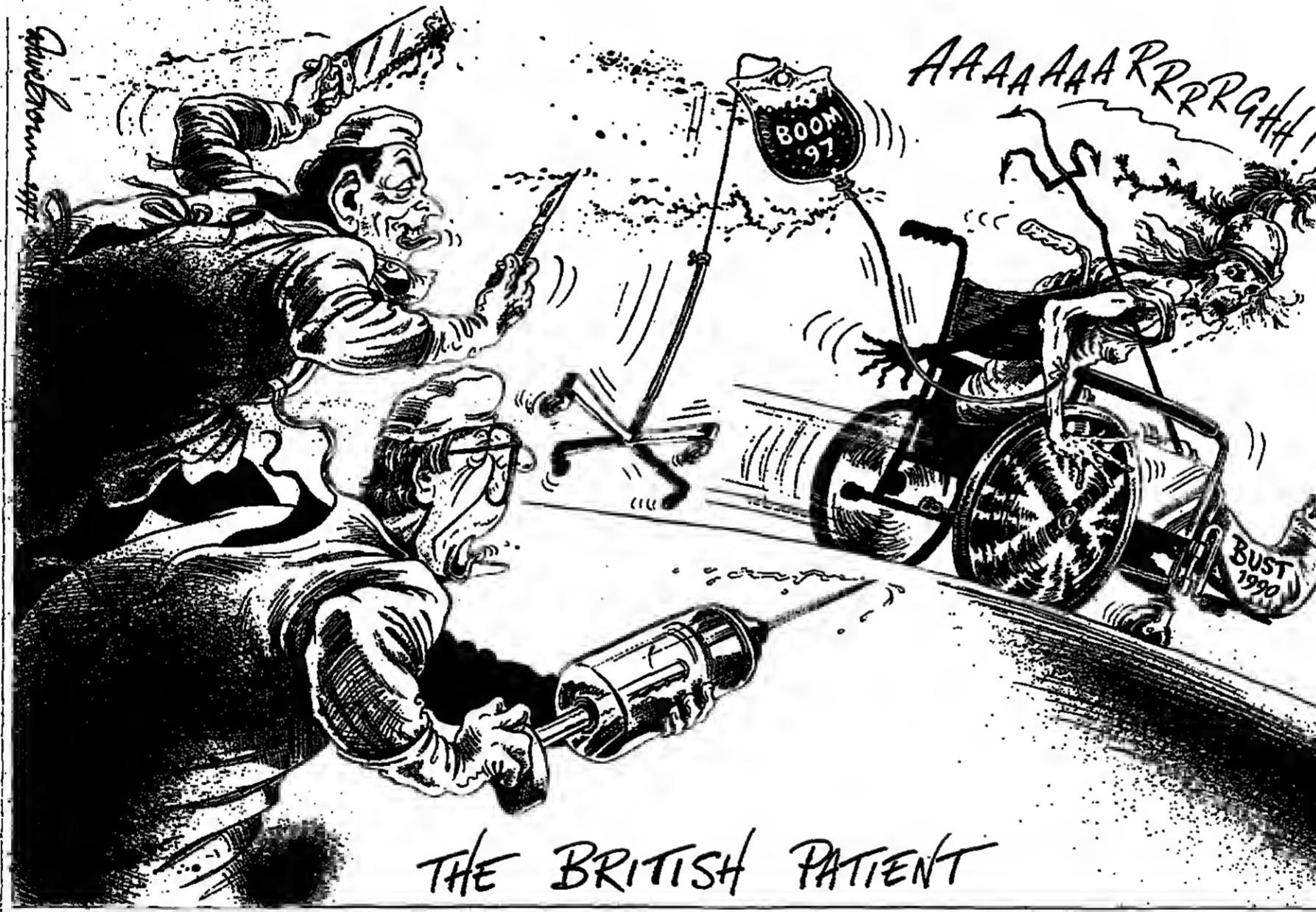
ERIC LEATHERBROW

Communication Manager

The Mersey Docks and Harbour

Company

Liverpool



Blame parties for 'silly moos'

Sir: We wish to take issue with Polly Toynbee's assertion that because one third of women have not yet decided how to vote they are "floating and dithering" "silly moos" who "don't care about politics ... and don't want to know" ("Women, the forgotten voters", 24 March).

Our research, which she referred to, shows clearly that women care deeply about many pressing social and political issues and that their perspectives on a range of mainstream policy areas are being ignored by the major parties.

Our report, *What Women Want on Politics*, is based on a survey of 10,000 women's views and detailed analysis of party policy. It suggests that when women are asked what they want, rather than asked to comment on existing political agendas, the issues they prioritise are significantly different from those highlighted by the parties.

Polly Toynbee finds it hard to forgive that many (older) women vote Tory. Yet the more important point (and the one politicians are finding difficult to accept) is that none of the parties is fully reflecting women's concerns and that asking the way a woman votes does not necessarily say much about what she really cares about.

Moreover, to lay responsibility for the poll tax Europhobia, privatised fat cats and poverty at women's door does us an injustice when those policies emanate from what remains an overwhelmingly male political system offering an ever-reduced political choice.

The puzzle remains if politicians are concerned about wooling

female voters, why are they so unwilling to address them directly, and admit publicly that women still face inequalities in many aspects of their private and public lives?

SUE TIBBALS
CHARLOTTE ADCOCK
The Women's Communication
Centre
London W6

Sir: A few days ago, my 84-year-old mother said she was not going to bother to vote at the general election. Her seven-year-old grandson, Thomas, rounded on her and asked "Have you never heard of the suffragettes?"

When my mother admitted she had, Tom told her: "Those women beat themselves to railings, went to prison and had all sorts of horrific things done to them so that women like you could vote. So you have got to vote!" My mother muttered something about him being right, and changed the subject.

TONY MARQUITA BENCH
London SW10

Gas is not a social service

Sir: Andrea Cook (letter, 21 March) argues that the discounting of gas charges for direct debit payers, and the consequent fact that those using pre-payment meters pay more for their gas, is the unacceptable face of competition. I disagree.

It is standard commercial practice for retailers to discount

charges to those who buy large amounts and/or pay by direct debit. It is appropriate that businesses charge customers a price that reflects the true cost of servicing those customers, encouraging an efficiency of operation that benefits us all.

It is emphatically not the job of businesses or their regulators to second-guess the Government on social policy as to which sections of the community are most deserving of subsidy. It is the case that this logic results in higher prices for utility services to those on lower income. Hence the fuel cost element in social security benefits should be increased.

PAUL GARDEN
London SW19

Secret EU deals on immigrants

Sir: The transfer of immigration and asylum matters ("Dutch to unveil plan for multi-speed EU", 24 March) to Community competence has important significance for the future protection of human rights in the European Union. Treatment of these issues, presently dealt with in secret, intergovernmental "third pillar" meetings, has been consistently criticised for lack of democratic and judicial accountability.

While the move to "communitise" will potentially provide a better constitutional basis for decisions in this area, the

degree of protection is in the details. Although it is proposed that the European Court of Justice will be competent to adjudicate, there appears to be no proposal to fully involve the European Parliament. As the new title is to include regulation of the free movement of persons, which currently requires parliament's agreement under the co-decision procedure, this would represent a dilution of democratic control.

If there is a serious wish to address the democratic deficit during this Inter-Governmental Conference, empowering the only directly elected institution to play a greater role seems essential. This would be backed by the proposed protocol to provide a legally binding minimum period for national parliaments to ensure effective scrutiny of the same proposals at member-state level.

PETER NOORLANDER
Justice
London EC4

Tobacco firms deny 'pay-off'

Sir: You report ("Tories accused of tobacco industry pay-off", 22 March) allegations about the tobacco industry's recent voluntary agreement with the Government on permitted additives. The impression has been given that some sinister deal was done behind closed doors.

There has been no "pay-off", as

ASH describes, and it is scurrilous to suggest such a notion.

The list of permitted additives which has been recently reviewed and updated consists of either natural ingredients, or those which can properly be described as "nature-identical". This list has long been held by the Department of Health, and is in the public domain.

Such added ingredients in the UK are mainly concerned with flavours for pipe, hand-rolling, and cigar tobacco, with regular cigarettes here overwhelmingly consisting of nothing more than the basic tobacco, plus some water content, all within the paper tubing, along with its filter.

As for the reference to the Government's failure to reach its 1994 objectives in terms of reducing teenage smoking, it has now been admitted that the targets set were hopelessly unrealistic. Looking back over 12 years of Government research findings, smoking incidence among the under-16s has shown one year's upturn offset by another's downturn. The overall trend has been remarkably stable.

CLIVE TURNER
Tobacco Manufacturers' Association
London SW1

Trail of sleaze

Sir: The Government seems to underestimate the importance of sleaze to the electorate. What they haven't understood is that many people regard privatisation and deregulation as the crime. Sleaze is just the evidence.

BRIAN GASCOIGNE
London NW3

Israeli bulldozers a world threat

Sir: The bulldozers at Har Homa must stop. They were set in motion to serve the short-term domestic interests of Mr Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, but unless reversed, their effects will spread far beyond the Middle East and risk sending dangerous vibrations worldwide.

President Clinton, as leader of the sole superpower, has courageously enlisted, though with varying degrees of success, the potential of the United States in the promotion of peace in the most troubled areas of the world – Ireland, former Yugoslavia, Africa and the Middle East. The Oslo agreements gave reasonable hope that the peace process might lead to understanding and accommodation between the Arab and Jewish peoples in the Middle East.

The bulldozers bid fair to extinguish that hope. They have strengthened the status of the Arab extremists from Algeria to Afghanistan – see Robert Fisk's dispatches from there (22 March) – and the risk is now high that these will direct terrorism, including Islam's suicide bombers, against any American establishment in the Middle East. The consequent loss of American lives can only strengthen the isolationist sentiment that is never far below the surface in the United States.

All of us in America and Europe who have in the past supported Israel's reasonable interests should now send an urgent and unequivocal message that we are not prepared to see Mr Netanyahu play his domestic politics to the detriment of our worldwide interests. The United States should reinforce this message, as only it can, with the termination of American financial support.

ANTONY MOORE
Brill, Buckinghamshire

Trollope tip for Abbey charges

Sir: An article on 21 March states that Westminster Abbey could charge visitors admission an admission fee "for the first time in its history".

In Trollope's *The Warden* (published 1855), the Rev Septimus Harding, having to get through a long day in London, "determined to take sanctuary in Westminster Abbey, so he again went there in an omnibus and finding that the doors were not open for morning service, he paid his twopence, and went in as a sightseer". (Chapter 15).

Trollope would not have invented such a charge. The Westminster authorities can claim that a precedent has been established.

A TILLOTSON
Cambridge

Baker bites back

Sir: Having been around the showbiz block long enough to know that any interview is at the mercy of the pre-meditated and stylistic limitations of the journalist involved, I note the less find it depressing that my quotes – even inaccurate ones – are still reported in hoary "cockney-ese" ("A few quiet words with Danny Baker", 24 March).

Yes, I talk with a south London accent. But would your Deborah Ross be phonetically pedantic if that accent were French, Russian or, heaven forbid, Asian?

DANNY BAKER
London SE5

interview

Makers of their own tragedy

Orlando Figes has written an account of the Russian revolution that spares no one: not the old regime, nor the Communists, nor the people. Andrew Marr spoke to the author about history's lessons

The state, however big, cannot make people equal or better human beings. All it can do is treat its citizens equally, and strive to ensure that their free activities are directed towards the general good. After a century dominated by the twin totalitarians of Communism and Fascism, one can only hope that this lesson has been learned. As we enter the 21st century, we must try to strengthen our democracy, both as a source of freedom and of social justice, lest the disengaged reject it again.

These are among the concluding words of a vast, hugely impressive history of the Russian revolution, *A People's Tragedy*, by Orlando Figes, which today won the 1997 WH Smith literary award. It tells the story of the greatest political upheaval of modern times, from the decay of Tsarism in the 1890s to its effective re-establishment under the monster Stalin in the Twenties. And it comes with a sting in the tail.

This is a remarkable book for many reasons. It is the fruit of years spent in the archive of the October Revolution and the Communist Party archives in Moscow. Figes got to know the key archives when they first began to open to outsiders in the late Eighties, and sat among the journalistic scavengers who came and went looking for spy stories.

Unlike them, he befriended the underpaid Russian archivists and emerged with a grisly but fascinating treasure trove.

Out of that trove, he has made a book which can change the way we think about Russia and what is happening there today. It is a history studded with gleaming, vivid personal stories and vignettes. First intended to help general readers through the book, they became essential.

Though this is grim stuff, there are hilarious and poignant moments. For instance, there is a glorious account of the Bolsheviks going to open talks with the invading Germans in 1917. They decide to bring representatives of the Russian workers, sailors, peasants and women with them for propaganda purposes. On the way to Petrograd's Warsaw railway station, they realise they have forgotten to bring a peasant.

What to do? As their car speeds through the city, they pass a bearded old man trudging home, pretend to give him a lift, and drag him off to Brest-Litovsk to make peace with the Germans. So the peasant, who was only trying to get home to his village, finds himself sitting drinking claret in Brest-Litovsk with Prince Ernst von Hohenlohe and discussing the future of mankind.

A chilling picture of cannibalism during the Russian revolution, uncovered by Orlando Figes (right). Main photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

Throughout, Figes uses key

observers who act as a kind of Greek chorus. There is Sergei Semenov, the idealistic and radical peasant leader, who migrates to the city under the Tsar, endures abuse and hardship trying to improve his village's lot, and ends up murdered by jealous rivals in 1922. Above all, there is Gorky, who is the betrayed, Christ-like hero and Stalin the bitter nemesis; and to rival histories from right-wingers which emphasise the reforms being carried on under the last Tsar – implying that, but for the Bolsheviks and some misfortunes in the First World War, Russia would have evolved into a benign, Western-style democracy.

Figes' thesis is bolder and less comfortable. His political angle is hard to discern from the book. It is certainly not right wing. No sentimental supporter of Tsar Nicholas could survive Figes' account of the old regime's anti-Semitic brutality and bone-headed stupidity. The democrats and liberals were better people but awful politicians, who, as Figes told me, saw the revolution as it was France in 1789, and made every wrong turn. Kerensky comes across as a Napoleonic huffoon; the White generals as

hopeless; and Lenin, whom Figes clearly loathes, as a cruel if brilliant monster.

Figes doesn't think Lenin will ever regain his pre-Revolutionary reputation among leftist intellectuals, as the full story of his role and savage views spills out of the Moscow and St Petersburg archives. Nor does Trotsky emerge as his Western admirers would wish; the gourmandising and dandyish orator was not as important in the civil war, or in the Bolshevik party, as was thought.

Red terror, even – as famine stalked Russia – cannibals who ate children. The ordinary level of peasant village cruelty, the peasants' thirst for rough justice and their enthusiasm for authoritarian, Tsar-like leadership are constant themes in the 800-page book.

This has been misunderstood

by some reviewers. Figes says, as anti-Russian bigotry: "I am trying to grapple with the problem of violence, which was central to the revolution". The Russians thought of democracy as being synonymous with the victory of the labouring people. Once that was established, the problem of what to do with the rest, the bourgeoisie, was inescapable. Peasants would have happily turned them into peasants but they were also vulnerable to the bloodthirsty rhetoric of the Bolsheviks.

Then as now, the toppling of the old order leads to utterly naive and over-optimistic beliefs about the future. For many in 1917, as Figes puts it, "Socialism and democracy were magical words" – there was a euphoric belief that by becoming the freest democracy in the world, Russia would suddenly become Western, that everything would be better – people would be richer, drunkenness would stop, people would stop beating their wives. The same after 1991 – a lot of people thought, Russia's a democracy, it's going to be Western, life's going to be much better.

And then in Russia, as in

many other countries, recently Albania, the reality came as a sickening shock, a betrayal. In

conversation, Figes is scathing about the West's failure to offer the right help at the crucial time. Instead of focusing on the need carefully to protect the welfare state while democracy was created, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan sent Russia "those monetarists who said that what Russia needs is mass unemployment and a shock economic programme".

So we screwed it up? I ask. "We screwed it up. It was partly that political scientists have got no knowledge of history – for them history started 20 minutes ago – and economists are the same, on the whole. So the people who went in and advised the Reagan-Thatcher alliance on our behalf had no knowledge of Russian culture (or any other) history, and certainly didn't expect a Russian backlash of the kind any historian could have warned about."

Figes does not exonerate the Western left for what has happened: Russian studies people were generally too close to the Soviet regime, he argues, and overestimated its capacity for reform. "So Thatcher and Reagan had to go to people who had never had any contact with Soviet society and had turned their backs on it."

This, it seems to me, is Figes' central assertion about history. This is why historians matter, and why we should honour the people in disorganized archives who burrow through individual life stories and weave them into bigger books, and remember what made people murderers and looters, sadists and cannibals, not so very long ago.

I began with a quotation that is worth finishing. Figes continues by warning that the emerging societies of the ex-Soviet bloc may not become democratic. This is not time for the sort of liberal-democratic triumphalism with which the collapse of the Soviet Union was met in many quarters. Reformed, (and not-so-reformed) Communists may be expected to do well electorally – and may even be voted back into power – as long as the mass of ordinary people remain alienated from the political system and feel themselves excluded from the benefits of emergent capitalism.

"Perhaps even more worrying, authoritarian nationalism has begun to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Communism ... their violent rhetoric, with its calls for discipline and order, its angry condemnation of the inequalities produced by the growth of capitalism, and its xenophobic rejection of the West, is itself adapted from the Bolshevik tradition. The ghosts of 1917 have not been laid to rest."

No one who has worked their way through this extraordinary book could help but be a little chilled by that. His view of Russia is bleak, I suggested yesterday. "I think it is bleak. I'm afraid there is no other way of putting it."

'A People's Tragedy: the Russian revolution 1821-1924' by Orlando Figes (Jonathan Cape, £20).



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Offer also applies to spouses

Enter His Lordship, with a roll of trousers

Before judges are obliged to reveal whether they are Masons or not, attention should be paid to a most extraordinary trial which is going on in the High Court at the moment, in which a Mr Sidney Minghella is accused of attempted murder. Here is an extract from yesterday's proceedings...

Judge: Before we go any further, may I say how very much I have enjoyed the performance so far of the counsel for the defence?

Counsel for the Defence: May I say in turn how much I have learnt from your Lordship's conduct of the case? Your lordship seems imbued with wisdom.

Judge: Hmm. Are you a mason by chance?

Defence: Yes, m'Lud, I am.

Judge: What a coincidence! So am I.

Defence: Yes, m'Lud, I know.

(Smiles and winks ingratiatingly at the judge.)

Counsel for the Prosecution:

Objection, m'Lud!

Judge: What objection?

Prosecution: It is quite out-

rageous that you, in Lud, and the counsel for the defence are

building up this improper relationship as fellow masons!

This can only be prejudicial to the case!

Judge: How ridiculous. Are you a freemason?

Prosecution: Yes, of course.

Judge: There you are, then.

We're all masons, on both sides.

You are as free to chum up as he is. No prejudice involved at all.

Prosecution: But there must be prejudice! It's inevitable!

Judge: What rubbish! If you had two football teams playing each other, do you think a player on one side would be more gentle in the tackle with an opposing player just because they were both members of – I don't know, the Playboy Club?

Prosecution: The Playboy Club ceased trading years ago, m'Lud.

Judge: Did it? Well, that certainly explains why it always seems to be closed when I go there. What do footballers do?

Prosecution: They were in-

terrogating the accused?

Prosecution: I was.

Defence: Money is money!

All three: (Chanting together)

Ra ra ra! Masons all! Backs

together, we stand or fall!

Roll your trousers, shake your

hand, all together we fall or

stand! (The jury stand and applaud this nifty bit of chor

work.)

Jury Foreman: May I inquire,

m'Lud, on behalf of the jury,



Miles Kington

Judge: Get on with it, then.

We don't hang about in the masons, you know. Time is money.

Prosecution: Friendship is money.

Defence: Paid far too much, in my opinion, but that's another matter.

Prosecution: Yes, m'Lud. Now,

defendant, your name is Sid-

ney Minghella?

Defendant: Yes, it is.

Prosecution: Are you any relation to Anthony Minghella?

Defendant: Who?

Prosecution: He is a distin-

guished film director.

Defendant: Never heard of him.

Judge: It's a very unusual name, Minghella.

Defendant: Not in Milan, it's

stuffed full of Minghellas.

Prosecution: Are you in fact from Milan?

Defendant: No, I'm from Bromley in Kent.

Prosecution: Hum. And are you in fact a mason?

Defendant: Yes. (Court buzzes with excitement.)

Prosecution: Ah-ha! And when did you join the masons?

Defendant: I didn't join, I trained.

Prosecution: How can you train to be a mason?

Defendant: Two years' art col-

lege, two years' stone-carc-

ing, two years with a firm of undertakers.

Judge: Good Lord. Do you mean you are a REAL mason, carving stone and all that?

Defendant: Yes. I'm a proper mason. Not like you lot.

Judge: I shall have to have time to think about this. Court adjourned!

More of this disquieting case tomorrow, I hope.

obituaries / gazette

Harold Melvin

Harold Melvin was one of the pioneers of the Philly Sound which now epitomises the mid-Seventies.

Under his guidance, the Blue Notes, a vocal group also boasting at the time the talents of Teddy Pendergrass, had several worldwide hits like "If You Don't Know Me By Now", "The Love I Lost", "Wake Up Everybody" and "Don't Leave Me This Way". But Melvin had been involved in music from a much earlier age and was still singing until a paralysing stroke put him in hospital a few months ago.

He was born in Philadelphia in 1941. The young Harold sang doo-wop on street corners with his childhood friends. They took up the name Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes and released the "If You Love Me" single on the local Josie label in 1956. The group played the local club scene, recording intermittently for small labels like Brook, Val-Ue ("My Hero" in 1960), Landa ("Get Out" in 1964) and Uni ("This Time Will Be Different" in 1969). They also cut a few tracks for Chess (with Luther Dixon) and the TK label (with Henry Stone). The Blue Notes constantly changed line-up and were very much Melvin's group, though he didn't always appear on stage with them. Rather, he choreographed their routines as well as arranging and composing some of their material, though they mostly sing standards and show tunes when performing in supper clubs.

By 1970, Melvin was the only original member left, and Teddy Pendergrass, who had joined from the Cadillacs, had stepped out from behind the drumkit to

take up lead vocals in a line-up which also comprised Lloyd Parkes, Lawrence Brown and Bernard Wilson. His characteristic vocal stylings attracted the attention of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, two veteran songwriters and producers who had just set up the Philadelphia International operation and signed a distribution deal with Columbia. In 1972, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes joined a roster which would soon include the O'Jays, Billy Paul and the Three Degrees and take over from Tamla Motown as the sound of mid-Seventies America.

After finding minor success with "I Miss You", they recorded "If You Don't Know Me By Now", a Gamble and Huff composition full of passion and yearning. It reached the American and British Top 10 in late 1972 and sold over two million copies.

The soong became a classic and was a popular choice for filmmakers trying to give a flavour of the period. It was revived by Simply Red in 1989. The Philly Sound ruled discotheques the world over and, in 1973, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes hit paydirt again with "The Love I Lost". Rich orchestrations and catchy choruses also ensured that "Satisfaction Guaranteed", "Where Are All My Friends" and "Bad Luck" were dance-floor fillers, while at the same time making pointed comments on the state of America. "Wake Up, Everybody", another political plea for peace and harmony penned by Gene McFadden, John Whitehead and Victor Castarphen and produced by Gamble and Huff, saw them back in the pop charts in 1976.

However Teddy Pendergrass,

who had the lion's share of vocal duties, was becoming uncomfortable with his position. People assumed he was Harold Melvin but he was just one of the Blue Notes and his financial rewards reflected that status. A billing adding "featuring Teddy Pendergrass" to the group moniker assuaged his worries for a while but, in 1977, he decided to go solo, scoring major hits in America with "The Whole Town's Laughing At Me" and "Close The Door", soul ballads of the late-night variety.

Before leaving the Blue Notes, Pendergrass had recorded "Don't Leave Me This Way" which battled it out with Thelma Houston's version in early 1977. Nine years later, the disco anthem was successfully brought up to date by the Communards, featuring Jimmy Sommerville.

Having replaced Pendergrass with David Ebo, the Blue Notes left Philadelphia International for ABC. "Reaching for the World" was a R&B hit but the group's popularity was on the wane and, when various records on Source, MCA, Philly World flopped, they returned to the night-club and cabaret circuit which was their original home. Two years ago, they appeared in London at the Greek Room of the Cafe Royal. By then, as all those years ago, Harold Melvin was the only original member. The hits were long gone, but some of the magic sparkle was still there.

Pierre Perrone

Harold James Melvin, singer, composer and arranger; born Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 24 May 1941; married Ovelia McDaniels (five children); died Philadelphia 24 March 1997.



If you don't know me by now: Melvin (front right) and the Blue Notes

Photograph: Gems / Reutera

The election of William Anthony Camps to the mastership of Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1970 was a fitting recognition of his quiet but all-pervasive influence at Pembroke over many years and crowned his career in the college he first entered as an undergraduate from Marlborough in 1928.

The son of a surgeon, Tony Camps came to Pembroke as a classical scholar. He was elected to a fellowship in 1933 at the early age of 23, and six years later was appointed a university lecturer. During the Second World War, he was one of the brilliant minds recruited by the Civil Service for special duties with the Ministry of Economic Warfare, but apart from this interlude, his life and talents were devoted to Pembroke.

From 1947 till 1962, Camps was the college's Senior Tutor in Classics, and also responsible for admissions. His insistence on high academic



Camps: gentle self-mockery

standards ensured that Pembroke got its share of top-quality candidates. He also welcomed able postgraduate students, many of them from overseas, and in 1963 he was appropriately appointed tutor for advanced students.

His talents were appreciated in America, as attested by invitations to visiting professors

ships in Toronto — which bore fruit in his book on Homer (*An Introduction to Homer*, 1980) — North Carolina and Princeton. This exposure was also responsible for widening the field from which Pembroke drew distinguished students.

Camps, Meredith Dewey, the Dean, and Bill Hotton, the Bursar, were a formidable, high-spirited triumvirate who made dining at the Pembroke high table a stimulating and entertaining experience, while at the same time holding the reins of the college firmly, guiding it the way it should go.

When in 1970, Camps came to the mastership of the college he loved it was not the easiest time in Cambridge — for example, student disturbances arose — but he was well endowed to weather the storm. A combination of wisdom, tact, steadiness and humour enabled him to see Pembroke through those difficult years and even to profit

from them. His views were not always universally supported and he was certainly not afraid to maintain an unpopular stand when he was convinced in himself that he was right (for instance, he did not support the admission of women to the college), but his devotion to the college and his concern for its welfare were so patent that no one could doubt the sincerity and integrity of his position.

Those who attended Camps's classical supervisions were a privileged band, for he combined a demand for meticulous accuracy with a rare sense of style. His teaching was based on the authority of the original texts and they were his constant points of reference rather than other commentaries. But none of this prevented him from gentle self-mockery of the scholarly profession. He delighted in quoting dictionary definitions — not necessarily substantiated — such as the description of a

Homer's delicacy as "a mess of cheese and honey, a haggis", the latter to gain a rise from his pupils from the North.

His university lectures introduced these gifts to a wider audience, and, although he was handicapped by a hesitancy in his speech, he never let it worry him that the result it did not bother his listeners. Indeed they would affectionately adopt the pronunciation "Hacer" which was his way of getting round his problem with "Cicer".

In particular, his lectures on Homer and Virgil attracted students, and the two poets were later the subjects of books (in 1980 and 1969 respectively) which he modestly called "Introductions" but which were really much more.

In the 1960s he also edited a four-volume series of the works of the poet Propertius with typical detailed care. They were perhaps fairly described by the publisher as conservative, but in

fact this made them particularly useful to undergraduates and sixth-formers, though there was plenty of meat for the more advanced student. With his innate modesty, and in keeping with his emphasis on the importance of the text, Camps wrote in a preface that "the poetry will be found in the poems themselves, and the reader is warned not to look for it in my part of the book, which is dry stuff".

He followed the further careers of his students with encouragement and advice (which sometimes went beyond mere persuasion) when their studies took them in different directions, and nothing gave him more delight than the appointment of one of his stars, Malcolm Lyons, as the Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic at Cambridge in 1985.

In the post-war years in Paris, he became acquainted, through a fortuitous confusion of mail deliveries based on the similarity of their names, with Miriam Camp, who had served with considerable distinction in the United States Foreign Service. They were married in 1953 and she was a splendid support to him at the Master's Lodge.

Tony and Miriam Camps retired to Little Abingdon, where friends were always sure of a warm welcome. But Tony's eyesight and general health began to fail and he was increasingly dependent on Miriam who devoted herself to his care and comfort. It was then one of life's ironies that she should predecease him. He took the loss hard but carried on bravely for a couple of years in a nursing home.

Robert Sanders

William Anthony Camps, classical scholar; born 28 December 1910; Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge 1970-81; married 1953 Miriam Camp (died 1994); died Cambridge 17 January 1997.



Carlo Fassi, skating trainer; born Milan 20 December 1929; Italian Champion in singles 1943-54, in pairs 1942-51; European Men's Champion 1953, 1954; married 1960 Christa von Kuczko (two sons, one daughter); died Lausanne 20 March 1997.

Dennis Bird

Carlo Fassi was one of the world's finest teachers of figure skating, who coached his pupils to an awesome number of world and Olympic championship titles. At the time of his sudden death in Lausanne he was working with a young American, Nicole Bobek, who had previously taken the bronze medal in 1995 and has potential to do even better.

Unlike some great trainers, Fassi himself had a notable championship record, first saw him in the 1949 world championships in Paris, who I rather condescendingly wrote in the *Skating World*: "Carlo Fassi of Italy was inclined to to speak (a common fault in compulsory figure skating) but is generally conceded to have

improved since last year's Olympics." He continued to do so, becoming European men's champion in 1953 and 1954.

Fassi's great opportunity came in 1961 when he was appointed chief instructor at the Broadmoor Ice Rink in the United States. Soon the world's most gifted skaters were travelling to Colorado Springs for tuition, among them Peggy Fleming of California. She was a perfectionist, a quiet, concentrated artist whose skating seemed to be a private communion between herself and the ice. The Fassi coached her to three world titles and the Olympic gold medal in 1968.

The Fassi teaching style owed its success to its flexibility. As he wrote in his 1980 textbook *Figure Skating With Carlo Fassi*: "A good teacher has that

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business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY DEPUTY EDITOR: MICHAEL HARRISON

Pilkington warns on the cost of German cuts

Michael Harrison

Pilkington, the St Helens-based glassmaker, yesterday dealt shareholders a fresh blow by warning that profits would be £55m lower this year because of the need for further redundancies and asset write-downs in Germany.

The warning sent Pilkington shares down a further 6 per cent to 121p compared with the 155p investors paid 18 months ago in a £303m rights issue.

Pilkington said that a collapse in flat glass prices since the start of the year and a slowdown in the German construction market meant that it would have to take the axe to its continental operations again for the second time in two years.

About 1,000 jobs are likely to be sliced in Germany as Pilkington cuts its processed glass capacity by 20 per cent. The cutbacks come on top of 1,900 job losses announced last year at a cost of £155m.

The fresh cutbacks means the group will incur restructuring costs approaching £20m in each of the next two years. It is also taking a further £40m charge to cover asset write-downs in the year just ending.

Pilkington said that as a result profits would be not less than £130m in the year to 31 March. That compares with forecasts of £250m last June and £190m as recently as last November.

Sir Nigel Rudd, Pilkington's chairman, said these results

represented a "setback" but he said its underlying strategy of cutting costs and rebuilding the business remained sound.

Finance director Andrew Robb said that most of the damage had been done by the sharp fall in glass prices since the end of 1996. This had been exacerbated by the strength of the pound against the mark, the building of new capacity in eastern Germany and weak German construction markets.

Float glass prices have

slumped from DM6.30 a square metre in November 1995 to DM4.50 now and Pilkington is not budgeting on them rising above DM5 for the remainder of this year. Mr Robb said the exchange rate impact on the group would be between £10m and £20m this year if the pound stayed at current levels.

Germany is Pilkington's biggest single market, accounting for about £800m of its £2.8bn turnover. The group has four float glass lines in Germany and

extensive process glass operations making finished products for the building and automotive industries such as double-glazing and car windshields.

But prices there have come under increased pressure because of the slump in construction orders and the move by rival glass maker Guardian to add to capacity by building a new line in eastern Germany.

Overcapacity is reckoned to be running at about 10 per cent.

The latest cuts will not affect

Pilkington's float glass lines in Germany which are operating at about 90 per cent capacity and are still having to produce glass to be shipped over to the US where Pilkington's six float lines cannot cope with demand.

In the last four years Pilkington has taken £300m out of its costs but still has more to do. "It has been a constant battle to turn a collection of acquisitions into a fighting fit company," Mr Robb said.

The latest cuts will not affect

Fed lifts key loan rate by a quarter point

David Osborne
New York

The Federal Reserve last night raised its key interest rate by a quarter of a point – the first increase in two years – describing the move as a "prudent step" in the light of the persistent strength of the US domestic economy.

The widely expected move prompted a 75-point turnaround on Wall Street, with the Dow falling by almost 30 points to 6878, having earlier shown gains of 45 points.

The rate hike increases the key Fed funds rate to 5.5 per cent. The discount rate remained unchanged.

Earlier, Wall Street had been in sanguine mood as the meeting of the Fed's policy-making Open Markets Committee began. It was said to be ready to agree a small increase in short-term rates as a pre-emptive strike against any possible return of inflationary pressures in the still-expanding US economy.

The increase represents the first tightening of monetary conditions in the US since February 1995. The last time rates were moved in either direction was in January last year, when there was a cut.

Most economists had anticipated the quarter point increase in the federal funds rate – the rate that commercial banks charge each other for overnight loans – from 5.25 per cent.

Far from being dismayed by the prospect of a rate increase, most stock investors appeared already to be looking beyond it. The Dow Jones industrial average put on more than 100 points in trading on Monday and was again in positive territory during the hours yesterday before the Fed's announcement.

Any bigger shock for Wall Street from the meeting would have been a decision to do nothing. A few economists continued to suggest that the Fed could agree to wait one more month until its May meeting to assess further what inflationary risks may be lurking.

A decision to stand still would have, however, undermined the credibility of the Fed chairman Alan Greenspan, who has been hinting strongly in recent weeks that the time for a precautionary tightening had arrived. He recently voiced particular concern about tightening of the labour market and what that could do first to wage levels and then consumer prices.

Also weighing on Mr Greenspan was his concern about what he has called the "irrational exuberance" that has continued to drive up the stock market through the first weeks of this year.

The action by the Fed last night came despite no clear evidence of a return of inflationary pressures.

ScotAm holders set for £1,400 windfalls

Clifford German

Policyholders in Scottish Amicable stand to gain windfalls worth £1,400 on average after the Prudential yesterday won the closely fought race for the life insurer.

The Pru's offer, valued at £2.15bn in total, consists of £850m worth of cash and assets plus a £1.3bn loan on commercial terms which will increase the investment performance of the ScotAm life fund.

Some 1.1 million with-profits policyholders will get an average of £550 in cash, plus a £430 bonus which will be added immediately to their policies. The balance will be added to their terminal bonuses.

Up to 400,000 non-profit policyholders get nothing because under ScotAm rules they are not members of the society.

Individual benefits depend on what policies are held, how much has been invested and how long the policies have been in force. Anyone who had applied to take out a with-profits policy before the close of business on Monday will get something.

The £600m cash element of the bid and about half the immediate bonuses, together worth £850m, will come from Prudential shareholders and policyholders. The balance of

the £1.3bn capital support allows ScotAm to free £720m (paid in annual and terminal bonuses) of the above sum from its life funds

the immediate bonus plus the terminal bonus, together worth £720m, represents surplus value that will be squeezed out of ScotAm's own funds.

Exactly what gets what will depend on detailed work over the next six weeks to find a formula which reflects the amounts policyholders have contributed, investment performance and the length of time policies have been held.

A circular giving details will be sent out to policyholders some time in May and a vote will be held on the proposals in June. The decision then has to go before the Scottish courts, which could take two or three months, so it may be October before the business is transferred and the bonuses are paid.

Other bidders may also be stalking the likely targets, which include Friends Provident, Scottish Provident and Scottish Life.

The Prudential's trump card, according to Roy Nicolson, chairman of the rival bids,

from Australian Mutual Provident and Abbey National will be revealed in the circular, but will not be released earlier unless the losers themselves decide to reveal them.

Yesterday Abbey National expressed disappointment about the bid outcome, but stressed its own plans to concentrate on rapid organic growth.

Prudential's chief executive, Sir Peter Davis, stressed the complementary nature of the two businesses, with the Pru's strength in with-profit bonds and annuities and the big networks of independent financial advisers matched by ScotAm's strength in mortgage endowments, personal pensions, unit-linked policies, long-term care and close links with small and medium sized independent financial advisers (IFAs).

The combined business will have over 7 million policyholders, £105bn of funds under

ScotAm's chief executive, was the £1.3bn loan to the ScotAm life fund, which will allow it to improve its performance by investing more in equities without straining its reserve requirements. The Pru has also guaranteed the jobs of all the 1,500 ScotAm staff who work at its head office at Craigforth, Stirling, for at least the next three years.

The 200 staff in ScotAm's overseas division and the 280 members of the salesforce are expected to stay at the Prudential intends to build up both departments. The only question mark is over the 150 staff at ScotAm's investment division based in Glasgow, although here too the Pru will give earnest consideration to maintaining the presence.

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management, and over £800m of new business in 1996.

The acquisition will slightly dilute the Pru's earnings per share in 1998, finance director Jonathan Bloomer admitted, but the extra business confirms the Prudential as market leader in UK fund management and puts it hard on the

beefs of Standard Life, the UK market leader in business sold through IFAs. The Pru's shares rose 15.5p to 555.5p.

Comment, page 25

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Comment, page 25

Record £1bn property sale rocks HK

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

at Salomon Brothers and long-time property specialist in Hong Kong.

The sale was made at a government land auction for an unusually large 275,472 sq ft site at the eastern tip of Hong Kong island which is neither fashionable nor known as a location for middle-class residence.

Nevertheless Sino Laod, a locally listed property developer, left other bidders staring in amazement as it scooped up the site for an equivalent price of almost £440 per sq ft.

Yesterday's sale is not an isolated example of bullish sentiment in the property market. In the residential market alone prices rose by an average of 30

per cent last year. This mirrored the rise in share prices, which is hardly surprising because property values account for the bulk of assets held by quoted companies and underpin the entire stock market.

Although the commercial property market is less buoyant than the residential market, a survey by locally based CY Leung & Co shows that CY Leung & Co shows that Hong Kong ranks as only second to Tokyo in terms of costs for setting up offices. In Tokyo the average cost last year was \$100 per square foot per month; in Hong Kong the average is \$80.

Last year the Peking-controlled Citic Pacific set another record by paying HK\$3.35bn to

buy reclaimed land near the centre of town to build a grade A office tower.

Construction of the new building is at an advanced stage and lettings has already begun. The developers are expected to make a good return despite the fact that yields on office properties are declining.

The property market has shrugged off uncertainties about the return to Chinese rule to such an extent that the government has set up yet another task force to examine ways of eliminating property speculation by no more than 15 per cent.

The main uncertainty is not political factors, but interest rate movements. Yesterday's sale came ahead of an anticipated rise in United States interest rates which is likely to be followed by a rate rise in Hong Kong where the local currency is tied to the greenback at a fixed rate.

and money can be made by simply selling the right to buy units in new developments.

Nevertheless most analysts predict that price rises in the current year will not match those of the past year. The Hang Seng Bank, a unit of HSBC Holdings, expects mid-range residential prices to rise by no more than 15 per cent.

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The action by the Fed last night came despite no clear evidence of a return of inflationary pressures.

A decision to stand still would have, however, undermined the credibility of the Fed chairman Alan Greenspan, who has been hinting strongly in recent weeks that the time for a precautionary tightening had arrived. He recently voiced particular concern about tightening of the labour market and what that could do first to wage levels and then consumer prices.

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The action by the Fed

business

Fresh interest in troubled retailer

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Country Casuals, the troubled women's wear retailer, faced fresh controversy yesterday when it emerged that its chief executive Mark Bunce is in talks which may lead to an offer for the company.

It is the second time in just 18 months that the retailer has been the subject of takeover interest from one of its directors. John Shannon, the group's former chief executive failed in a bitter £27m takeover battle for the company just 18 months ago.

His offer was valued at 40p per share. Last night Country

Casuals shares closed up 7.5p at 102.5p.

Mark Bunce and his wife Christina who is commercial director, led a management buy-out of Country Casuals from Coats Viyella in 1989. They still retain 10 per cent of the stock but the proposed level of their offer is not yet known.

Their main interest would be the core Country Casuals chain, which is profitable. The group is already in the process of selling its loss-making Elvi division, which sells clothes for larger women, and its Lerose manufacturing business.

The company said yesterday that in the interests of max-

imising shareholder value it would allow Mr Bunce to pursue his offer "for a limited period of time".

However, neither Mr Bunce, nor his wife will take part in the appraisal of any offers for Elvi or Lerose, nor any offer for the company as a whole.

Country Casuals' finance director, Andrew Mills-Baker, said that although no offer from Mr Bunce had yet materialised he assumed one would be forthcoming.

He admitted that to have two approaches from past or current chief executives in two years was unusual. Mr Bunce was not in the office yesterday. Commenting on a profits

warning last November, Mr Bunce said: "We've got a core business (Country Casuals) that made profits of £3.5m last year. The problem is we have a start-up business (Elvi) and a manufacturing division that are dragging that down at the moment."

Mr Bunce bought 75,000 shares at 68p following the warning.

Country Casuals is due to report its full year results on Thursday, with pre-tax profits of just £100,000 expected. Investors will be looking for some reassurance on the performance of the company, which has issued two profits warnings in the last four months.

The Elvi stores and the Lerose business are expected to have lost £1.6m and £1.1m respectively.

Country Casuals was founded in 1973. Following the 1989 buy-out, John Shannon together with Mr and Mrs Bunce, took the company on to the stock market in 1992, when its shares were priced at 130p per share. They reached 180p in January 1993 but have been below the issue price since last autumn.

John Shannon's hostile bid was a bitter affair led through his vehicle Ciro Holdings. He had resigned in September 1994 after a dispute over his contract.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
EDITED BY TOM STEVENSONFull steam ahead
at P&O as cruises
offset ferry losses

It is a year now since Lord Sterling launched his charm offensive on P&O's increasingly disgruntled investors, promising them property sales, a flotation of the Bovis housebuilding arm and, most importantly, the novel idea of a focus on shareholder value via a return on capital target of 15 per cent.

Yesterday's full-year figures

for 1996, which emerged at a

much later than forecast

£32.8 (£320.4m) showed the

company making great strides

on a number of fronts even if

the gaping hole the Channel

Tunnel has blown in the P&O's

operation and a collapse in

bulk shipping and container

rates took the edge off the

other activities.

Return on capital was

pegged at 11.3 per cent (11.1

per cent) as a result but the

target should be more than

achievable if the mooted cost

benefits of the shipping

merger with Royal Nedlloyd

come through and the Stern

deal is passed by the MMC.

Star of the show was cruises,

where the gap between P&O

and its British rival Cunard has

started to yawn. The division

now accounts for a fifth of

group assets and almost a

third of profits and, at 16.9 per

cent, its return on assets is right

up with market leader Cunard

of the US. With a 50 per

cent increase in capacity in the

pipeline, the company is tak

ing a big gamble on this con

tinuing to be one of the leisure

industry's biggest growth areas.

Other strong performers

were housebuilding, where

Bovis jumped from £17.1m

profits to £28.8m, and property

development, where a firmer

market in the US, UK and

Australia drove profits more

than 50 per cent higher to

£38.8m. Investment property

remains a solid cash cow and

the Australian arm is growing

in importance.

Strong as they all were,

however, they could do little

to disguise the damage of a

£32.5m fall in profits from

ferries to £41m. Despite a 21

per cent growth in the number

of tourist vehicles now cross

ing the Channel and a 10 per

cent rise in freight, P&O's

tourist volumes fell 8 per cent

and the freight figure was

merely maintained. It may go

against the grain for the Gov

ernment to sanction the cre

ation of a ferry monopoly but

the strength of the competitive

threat from Eurotunnel means

consolidation is inevitable.

P&O's shares have had a

good year, recouping much of

the underperformance since

the beginning of 1995 that

bad many investors question

whether Lord Sterling

targeted the plan.

On the basis of forecast prof

its of about £360m this year,

the shares, up another 9p to

634.5p, trade on a prospective

p/e ratio of 15 and yield 6 per

cent, a long way off the 8 per

cent you could have locked in

a year ago but still an impres

sive income. Good value.

The key issue is whether

Booker can make its acquisi

tion of Nurdin & Peacock work.

It has already pledged to reduce

costs by £100m by next year. It

says head office costs were

higher than thought, leaving

more scope for cutting, and that

the purchasing benefits may be

greater than anticipated. The

rationale is that with a market

share of 38 per cent and com

bined sales over £4bn, it should

be able to match the big multi

ple's buying muscle. The down

side is that margins are wafer

thin and Booker's typical cu

tomers—corner shops and high

street independents—are being

squeezed by the supermarkets.

On analysts' forecasts of

£103m, the shares, down 4p

yesterday to 333.5p, trade on

a forward rating of 11. Given

that companies in the same sec

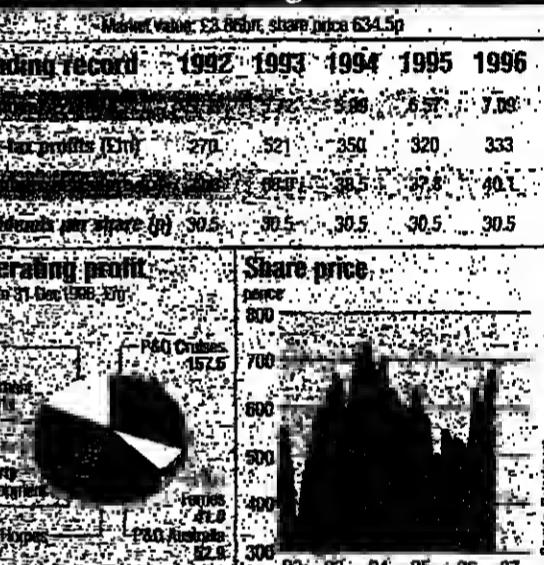
tor such as Unigate trade on

similar ratings and have more

reliable records, there is better

value elsewhere.

P&O: At a glance



Clubhaus tees up for take-off

Clubhaus has come a long way in the year since it floated on the market following a demerger from the Ex-Lands property company. With only a couple of golf courses acquired eight more to achieve the critical mass and economies of scale that should make the company stand out from the rest of the fragmented and undermanaged golf industry.

Turnover in the ten and a half months to December soared to £7.3m, compared with an operating profit of £1.1m, a 15 per cent margin.

The trick for Clubhaus is to manage its pretty

rapid growth and work out exactly at what level

it wants to pitch its membership, both in social

terms and price-wise. Currently it seems

slightly unsure whether it is running premium

members' clubs or more cheap and cheerful

play and courses. Given that the company wants

to encourage reciprocity of membership be

tween its constituent clubs and also its recently

acquired Mayfair business club, it arguably

needs more focus.

That said, Clubhaus is the only company

attempting to bring big business disciplines to

bear on the dilettante world of golf. A deal with

Whitbread, saving £100,000 on 19th-hole beer

costs alone, is one example of how economies

of scale can lead to significant savings. The

payment of courses is also considerable.

On the basis of forecast profits of £3.8m, the

shares, up 2p to 87.5p, currently trade on a

prospective price/earnings multiple in the

mid-teens. With the promise of free members

market report / shares

Data Bank

Footsie does a smart about-turn in the wake of Dow

The election sell-off came to an abrupt end. After six days of ragged retreat, shares staged a strong rally with Footsie surging 55.9 points to 4,270.7.

New York provided the lifeline. Although interest rates were expected to move higher, a sudden rush of US buying translated into a more confident atmosphere in the stock market which was prepared to, at least for the time being, ignore the implications of dearer money.

Even the election and related rumblings were forgotten. However, Footsie is still more than 150 points below the level ruling when John Major announced polling day.

Financials led the recovery. HSBC appeared to turn positive on a collection of money shares including Lloyds TSB, up 28.5p to 432.5.

The Prudential Corporation's annexation of Scottish Amicable left the market pon-

dering about the intentions of the thwarted bidders, particularly Abbey National, another HSBC up, up 21p to 735.5p. The Pru rose 15.5p to 535.5p.

Other financials seen in many quarters as the crucial indicator of the market's behaviour, moved ahead. Commercial Union, for example, threw off worries about any tobacco liability, jumping 31.5p to 671.5p.

Centrica, the British Gas distribution arm, added 3.5p to 62.5p as SBC Warburg took the shares to its corporate heart. It suggested the group, dubbed eccentric in some quarters, had a short-term share expectancy of 70p with 90p a medium-term target. BG, the other half of the gas equation, rose 2p to 160.5p.

Pilkington, the glass maker, had yet another shattering day, falling 7.5p to 121p, lowest for four years. A warning profits for the year ending this

month would not reach the market's expectations of 18.5p to 17.5p as the planned German steel takeover failed to materialise with Krupp withdrawing its hostile bid for Thyssen. Now the hope is the two will manage a peaceful merger. In the short term, however, the break-down means European steel prices will not enjoy the benefit of reduced German competition.

Drugs had an eventful day. Shield Diagnostic added 35p to 72.5p and Scotts recovered 40p to 419p following a presentation for its Foscan cancer drug. Polymate Pharmaceuticals

put on 18.5p to 17.5p reflecting a collaboration link with Oxford Molecular.

Against such a background Cambridge Antibody, placed at 500p, had little difficulty romping to 610p.

Associated British Foods, with the £360m Irish sale proceeds burning a hole in its corporate pocket, rose 26p to 539p as the market pondered its likely move. Tate & Lyle, firm at 434.5p, is one target in the frame.

The buoyant atmosphere was good for Railtrack, up 21p to 467p, and RAT Industries put on another 19p to 528p on demerger hopes and the growing belief some of its tobacco

liabilities could be ringfenced. Oriel, the insurance broker, ended at a 12-month low, off 9p to 107.5p. It has been in takeover talks since February of last year. These leisurely proceedings have finally established it is "unlikely" that a satisfactory offer will appear.

Pathfinder Properties, a BES company, made its AIM

debut through an introduction at 17.5p.

Symonds, the once high-flying electronic group, blew a fuse, falling 20.5p to 38.5p after admitting figures will not

match market expectations.

Ashurst Technology, with Canadian metal interests, rose 7.5p to 60p; the price touched 95p last month. The company may have hit a rich gold seam in the Ukraine. It announced a co-operation deal involving five "advanced" gold projects and three exploration prospects.

Megalomedia, the old Grad-

uate Appointments recruitment business which is led by Lord Santchi, edged ahead 1p to 91p. An institutional investor has picked up 500,000 shares at 90p, most coming from Webmedia, a company in which Megalomedia has an 18.9 per cent interest.

The media group is known

to be on the look-out for acquisitions. It acquired its stake in Webmedia in August.

Hay and Robertson, the merchandiser, continued to recover, reaching 153.5p, up 10p. Cash Converters, an Australian-based group specialising in franchised second-hand shops, added 2.5p to 21p. The shares have been weak. Floating at 27p last year, the company said it was unaware of any trading reason for the share retreat and blamed comments by an Australian MP. It said "clean" profits would not vary by more than 15 per cent from last year's A\$6.5m.

Taking Stock

Silver Shield, a windscreens replacement group, is still near to completing a large acquisition and in the meantime is busy buying in its franchisees. It hopes eventually in own all its outlets. Trading progress has been slower than chairman Neil McClure, ex-URS, had expected. Interim profits come out at £81,000 and, perhaps, £150,000 is likely for the year. The shares firms to 3.75p.

Interest is developing in TLS, the vehicle rental company. Figures today should be encouraging, say 25.8m up from £4.2m. The current year could produce £7.5m. The group's rental success is attracting admiring glances and could soon produce a bid. GE Capital, the US giant, is thought to be interested and other predators lurk. The shares rose 4p to 120.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The proceedings (PE) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights x Ex dividend x A ex u United Securities Market's Suspended pp Party Paid pm Nil Paid Shares + AM Stock Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 333 and when prompted to do so enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports, dial 0891 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Realtime 00 Sterling Rates 04 Water Shares 36

UK Stock Market Report 01 Button Report 05 Electricity Shares 40

UK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 High Street Banks 41

Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21

For assistance, call our helpline 0771 4378 1900am - 500pm.

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Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000

Stobart 247,400 247,400 30,000 30,000 125,000 125,000 22,000 22,000

BT 180,000 180,000 10,000 10,000 125,000 125,000 75,000 75,000

Centrica 150,000 150,000 8,000 8,000 90,000 90,000 70,000 70,000

BP 80,000 80,000 8,000 8,000 45,000 45,000 45,000 45,000

Utes TSI 150,000 150,000 10,000 10,000 30,000 30,000 25,000 25,000

FTSE 200 Index hour by hour

Open 4274.8 up 326 11.00 4282.8 up 380 14.00 4280.5 up 457

09.00 4248.6 up 338 12.00 4257.1 up 423 15.00 4261.5 up 457

10.00 4258.6 up 450 13.00 4259.8 up 448 16.00 4262.6 up 559

Close 4270.7 up 559

Other Financial

Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000 Stock Vol 000

AB Group 10,000 10,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000

Burnhill 10,000 10,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000 1,000

Centrica 150,000 150,000 8,000 8,000 90,000 90,000 70,000 70,000

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FTSE 200 Index hour by hour

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sport

RUGBY UNION: Manager Fran Cotton will announce his party for the Lions tour of South Africa a week today. Chris Hewett considers the options, selects his own squad and analyses the contenders for the No 10 jersey



Mike Catt

England, 21 caps)
A secure, error-free performance against Wales a week-and-a-half ago re-established Catt's credibility as an outside-half at the top level. The Lions could use his brilliance in broken field and his ability to play centre and full-back virtually ensures his presence on tour. He can kick goals, too, although he is yet to win a pressure game with his right boot.



Jonathan Davies

(Wales, 32 caps)
Only a couple of years ago, Davies would have been the answer to Fran Cotton's prayers. He could do the lot: kick, run, tackle, organise, stand on his head or levitate, depending on the demands of the situation. It is not that he can no longer play - his efforts in adversity against England were wholly admirable - but the old acceleration has gone for good.



Paul Grayson

(England, 9 caps)
Ian McGeechan's goalkicking stand-off at Northampton, Grayson is perfectly equipped to play a tight, structured game within narrow and very specific parameters. However, the Springboks are likely to pose very different problems to those Grayson habitually encounters in the Five Nations and there is nothing to suggest that a limited game plan will work in South Africa.



Arwel Thomas

(Wales, 10 caps)
Rumour has it that Thomas was not even sent an availability form by the Lions selectors and if that is true, he has every right to be naked. A brilliant performance under the greatest imaginable pressure at Murrayfield in January was proof of a rich talent at work and there were further flashes of vision in the match with France in Paris. A natural kicker, too. Think again, Fran.



Gregor Townsend

(Scotland, 25 caps)
A rough Five Nations should not disguise the fact that Townsend remains one of British rugby's most precious possessions. Many of his more ludicrous excesses during the 1997 championship were the direct result of the mediocrity around him. Rightly or wrongly, Townsend felt honour bound to try something, anything, out of the ordinary. Too good to ignore.

Wilby the new man in charge at Hull

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

One of the game's most colourful and well-travelled characters, Tim Wilby, has taken over as chairman of Hull. Wilby, who had two spells with Hull as a player, is ploughing in the fortune he has made in property development.

"Money will be available for strengthening the team," Wilby said. "Humberside needs a Super League team and there is no option to merge with Hull Kingston Rovers at the moment. We'll make it on our own."

Wilby has put an initial £300,000 into the club to make him the major shareholder. All but two of the club's directors have stood down.

Wakefield Trinity have drawn up a unique ground-sharing plan with the town's rugby union club. The two are to set up a joint company to oversee the building of a 15,000-all-seat stadium, probably next door to Yorkshire Cricket Club's proposed new ground at Durbar.

Casterton are negotiating with Wakefield District Council and developers with a view to building a multi-sport stadium to replace Wheldon Road, their home for the last 70 years.

Simon Knox, Warren Jowitt, Paul Medley and Taihi Reihana are all possible choices to replace Jeremy Donougher in the Bradford second-row for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final against Leeds on Saturday. Donougher will be out of action for two months with a broken ankle.

Leeds have Adrian Morley and Tony Kemp rated as doubtful. Morley's elder brother, St Helens' second-row Chris, could miss Friday's Super League meeting with Wigan. He has been cited by the Rugby League 'over' an alleged high tackle in last Saturday's semi-final victory over Salford.

Iesyn Harris's career is deeper in limbo than ever, with Warrington saying they will not sell him to St Helens and that he will not play again for them.

Heebie-jeebies and the case for Thomas

The presidential brow had been furrowed for days. The autocratic spirit spurred by the intolerably heavy burden of high office. What to do? Finally, Dr Louis Luyt, self-appointed grandee of Springbok rugby, took a deep breath and passed judgement. From now on, his beloved Transvaal would be known as the Gauteng Lions.

"One of the hardest decisions of my life," said the good doctor of his uncharacteristic flirtation with the forces of political correctness. He should worry. Compared to the issues confronting the management of the *real* Lions over the next week, Luyt's little predicament was nothing more than a gentle head-scratcher before sundown.

Next Wednesday, Fran Cotton, manager of the 1997 Lions, will unveil a 35-strong squad for this summer's three-Test tour of South Africa. Given that the savage demands of the 13-match itinerary would have tested the strength and application of the greatest of all British Isles parties - the unbeaten 1974 vintage of which

Cotton himself was a valued member - it is asking the earth of a more commonplace crop to successfully restore some swagger to northern hemisphere rugby.

Especially as the selectors are faced not only by a shortage of high-class prop forwards and a choice of the Hobson variety at outside-half, but also with a goalkicking crisis waiting to happen. Injuries sustained during an exciting, but undeniably flawed, Five Nations Championship still threaten to disrupt the party before it gets to Heathrow, let alone Johannesburg. Oh, and there is no outstanding captaincy candidate, either. Do not expect a sympathy card from this neck of the woods. Dr Luyt.

Twenty-three years ago, the Lions kicked South African backsides from the Cape to the veldt and all the way back again. They fielded the greatest pack in the whole history of British rugby, possessed a heavily half-back pairing in Gareth Edwards and Phil Bennett and, when they became bored with the bludgeon, were able to call

on rapiers like Andy Irvine and the famously initialised Williamses - JJ and JPR - to apply whatever *coup de grâce* was needed. Only the centres, Dick Milliken and a certain Ian McGeechan, were considered mere craftsmen rather than celestial beings from the Planet Triumph.

McGeechan is now coaching his third Lions party and it is intriguing that, on this occasion, the greatest concentration of world-class talent is to be found in the centre. Indeed, the selectors can afford to use Jeremy Guscott's unique gifts on the wing and therefore maximise

the quality of their midfield by including Will Greenwood, the best uncapped player in English rugby, alongside Allan Batten, Scott Gibbs and Alan Tait.

The idea will infuriate Guscott, but his sublime performance as a replacement wing against Wales in the last round of Five Nations matches should concentrate the minds of Cotton, McGeechan and Jim Telfer when they come to draw up their final list. Left-wing options are limited in the extreme and it makes far more sense to field two class centres, plus Guscott, rather than put an unnecessary

squeeze on the available talent by fielding a journeyman for the sake of positional convention.

However, to make all this work, the Lions will need a genuine play-making, string-pulling puppeteer at outside-half. Until, as Cotton freely admitted less than a fortnight ago, the position has given him the heebie-jeebies ever since he took on the responsibility of management. None of the obvious contenders can boast all the right credentials: Mike Catt and Gregor Townsend are able to break a game, but their tactical kicking can be lamentable, while Paul Grayson, who kicks like a mule,

is only truly happy when his keys are winning the war up in the front line.

Which makes it doubly surprising that Arwel Thomas, the most natural stand-off in Britain, has been all but ignored. Too frail, says his critics, conveniently forgetting that neither Bennett nor Barry John were ideally equipped to kick sand in the faces of rampaging southern hemisphere nasties. Too erratic, say the knockers. More erratic than Catt or Townsend? Come off it. It may be too late for the selectors to invest in magic rather than muscle, but hope springs eternal.

The pack contingent is generally less contentious, especially as the priceless Jason Leonard can play on both sides of the front row. Doddie Weir's spectacular progress during the Five Nations ensures a decent band of boilerhouse sweaties - Tim Rodber's line-out prowess gives the Lions extra insurance in that position - while the emergence of Eric Miller, Richard Hill and Colin Charvis gives the back row plenty of youthful vim and vigour.

Which leaves two issues: goalkicking and leadership. Neil Jenkins has a puncher's chance, if that is not too flippan

t description, of recovering from his serious arm injury in time to make the trip and, if he declares himself available, Cotton and company will fall to their knees in thanksgiving. If he misses out, Grayson and Jonathan Davies might expect to share the marksmanship duties.

Cotton's hard-headed assertion that there would be no room for sentiment in his deliberations over the captaincy should not undermine the claims of Ieuan Evans.

Retirement may be beckoning but Evans remains an automatic Test choice and while Martin Johnson, the taciturn front-jumper from Leicester, remains a short-priced favourite for the pin job, the engagingly communicative one-club wing from Llanelli has far more experience of life in the media Big Top.

Besides, a Welsh captain would be a clever call. Self-respecting Celts can stand only so much English influence...

CHRIS HEWETT'S LIONS PARTY

Full-backs
Neil Jenkins (Plymouth and Wales), Tim Simpson (Newcastle and England), Steve Thompson (Leicester and England), Rob Williams (Cardiff and Wales).

Wings
Adriano Adriaanse (Bath and England), Jason Leonard (Bath and England), Jeremy Guscott (Bath and England), Jonny Wilkinson (Leicester and England), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland).

Centres
Alun Wyn Jones (Richmond and Wales), Scott Gibbs (Swansea and Wales), Will Greenwood (Leicester and Scotland), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland), Jonny Wilkinson (Leicester and England).

Outside-halves
Mike Catt (Bath and England), Arwel Thomas (Swansea and Wales), Gregor Townsend (Perth and Scotland).

Left-hand props
Peter Cade (Cardiff and Ireland), Jason Leonard (Bath and England), Steve Thompson (Leicester and England), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland).

Right-hand props
Peter Cade (Cardiff and Ireland), Jason Leonard (Bath and England), Steve Thompson (Leicester and England), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland).

Locks
Peter Cade (Cardiff and Ireland), Jason Leonard (Bath and England), Steve Thompson (Leicester and England), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland).

Tight-headed props
Peter Cade (Cardiff and Ireland), Jason Leonard (Bath and England), Steve Thompson (Leicester and England), Matt Giteau (London and Scotland).

Open-side flankers
Dafydd Gwynne (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales).

Blind-side flankers
Dafydd Gwynne (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales), Dafydd Jones (Cardiff and Wales).

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

PHILIPS

Let's make things better

MONTH SEVEN PRIZEWINNER

Congratulations to Mr Wayne Prior of Wanganui in Oxfordshire who is this month's winner with his team Fools Gold United which accumulated 119 points. He has won a pair of tickets to see England's world cup qualifier with Georgia at Wembley on 30 April 1997. The seventh month's prize is for matches played between 24 February and 16 March.

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkicker/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

TOP FIFTY LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 16 MARCH

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	JDS1 MARTI	833
2	MR SEAN BRIDSBANE	OASIS	810
3	MR ASHLEY BRETTLE	RELEGATION 12	809
4	MR PAUL MATTHEW	THE DOOR MAT	803
5	MR ALEXANDRA FEAST	THE ZOROSTRAN ZENITHIC ZYGRIE	801
6	MR SIMON LIU	DEFENCE ROVERS	800
7	MR GARFIELD MCCULLEN	GARFIELD BOYS SECOND	793
8	MR LAN GRUDT	SILK CITY	793
9	MR RICK YAP	DUT DF MIND	791
10	MR JOHN COX	SOUTHFILL FC.	791
11	MR WILLIAM BARR	KRUEGER FC.	791
12	MR SCOTT MCINERNEY	TEAM SQUIDLIPS	784
13	MR KEITH HIDRY	NAME	790
14	MR ADAM HOGG	DIGRANIC MANURE FC.	788
15	MR SIMON DRAPER	PLATE FC.	785
16	MR GRAHAM LONGSDANE	SANDLING STROLLERS	785
17	MR JOE GOODING	TEAM SQUIDLIPS	784
18	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	ARLENSIU	783
19	MR ROBERT GREENFIELD	THE GULLS	783
20	MR BEN KENDALL	TURKEY'S TRIGGER	781
21	MR DARREN NICHOLAS	EDNA	779
22	MR G WHITE	WHITE CITY	779
23	MR A MORAN	KICK START	778
24	MR J GODWIN	NORWOOD	778
25	MR K B MALCOLM	INTER MALCOLM	778
26	MR JONATHAN MCCROSSEN	WASH TOP ARMY	776
27	MR GARY HAYLES	101 ALLSTARS	776
28	MR JONATHAN DAVIS	GOLDEN TEAM	776
29	MR ANDREW BOLTON	ANDREW'S 8 TEAM	775
30	MR PAUL FULLWOOD	KING DF HBBIES FC.	775
31	MR ANDREW CODWIN	FC ALZEEY	775
32	MR PETER FRANKENTAL	SANDINO	773
33	MR ANDY LANE	ANYONE CAN TOUCAN	773
34	MR MARTIN RENNICK	WILD ROVERS	772
35	MR D R MILLS	THE MUSHROOM LAYERS	772
36	MR ANDY SWANNEY	DOG'S BRICK	771
37	MR S J PERRY	THE GREAT ESCAPERS	771
38	MR D J IDHONSON	THE AWAY WINNERS	771
39	MR JOHN BRITTEL	FAKE MADRID	771
40	MR TONY AKINDALE	OLIE VILLA	770
41	MR ALEX FITZGERALD	ALF CHAMPIONS ELECT	770
42	MR P CURRAN	NO DETAILS	770
43	MR F J GREAVES	ANONYMOUS ROVERS	769
44	DR STEPHEN MATTHEWS	IMPERIAL BATES	769
45	MR S KING	CRUISING ALEXANDREA	769
46	MR P HEMMINGWAY	WAGON WHEELS	768
47	MR BILL COOPER	YEP MOP 2000	768
48	MR JAMES WARD LILLY	JILL'S REMMS GONE MISSING	768
49	MR CHRIS SCOTT	BRUCE LEE FC.	767
50	MR BARRY MORGAN	BAZZA'S BOYS	767
51	MR MARK HAYDEN	TROWBRIDGE WANDERERS	767

Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

The Team Market and Scores table published below, shows four scores, The Week 32 (Wk 32) column lists all points scored in Premiership matches played between Monday 17 March - Sunday 23 March inclusive. Column A lists all points scored before the transfer period. Column B lists all points scored after the transfer period. The Overall (Ov) column lists the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 23 March. Also published today is the Top 50 League table (see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 16 March. Results will be published every Wednesday in The

Independent for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday. The overall Top 50 League table will be printed every Wednesday and again on Sunday. Terms and conditions as previously published.

PRIZES
The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World

Mandella eloquent as he takes to world stage

Racing

GREG WOOD
reports from Dubai

Wherever it was that Richard Mandella learned to train racehorses, he clearly skipped a class. It was the one which most British trainers seem to have taken twice, where they learn to be suspicious, aloof and evasive – everything, in fact, that Mandella is not.

The American will saddle Siphon and Sandpit, the first and second favourites in the Dubai World Cup, the richest race on the planet, this Saturday, which is pressure enough in itself. Yet even after hearing yesterday that both had drawn a difficult wide stall for the \$4m, (£2.5m) event, Mandella discussed their chances with a willingness and turn of phrase which would appal many of his British counterparts.

"The way the race-track's set up here, I don't think it makes a lot of difference," he said. "Siphon [drawn 10] will be spinning his tyres and going to

the front when he leaves. There's not much we can do to change that and I wouldn't want to try. We're just happy to be in there. Two bullets are all we need, better than one and I couldn't split them."

Both Ladbrokes and Hills make Siphon their favourite for Saturday's main event, at around 5-2, while Sandpit, who recently finished just behind Siphon in the Santa Anita Handicap when running on dirt

for the first time, is 7-2 with Ladbrokes. That the dirt-hardened Americans are rated so highly is not surprising given that they filled the first three places in last year's inaugural World Cup, and it is a measure of the task facing Helios, last October's brilliant Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe winner, that he is freely available at 6-1 with William Hill.

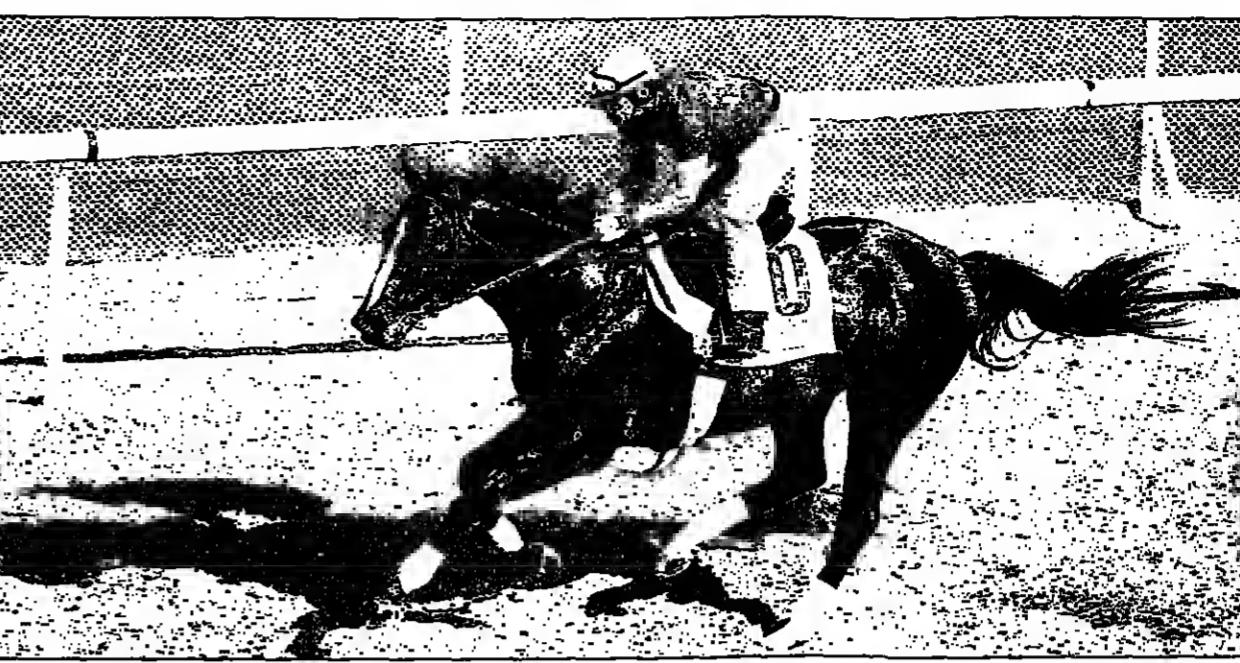
For British punters, a flat race of such quality between the jumping pinnacles of Chel-

tenham and Aintree may be a difficult concept to grasp. Yet the standard of Saturday's 10-furlong contest is undeniable, not least when summed up by Mandella as only an American can.

"Flemensfirth took a million dollars," the trainer said. "He breezed a mile in 1.35 and changed here last week and he has a great race record. Helios won the Arc pulled up, and how great a horse does it take to do that? Singspiel, if he can adapt from dirt to turf is a great horse too, it's just one after another. The Japanese mare [Hokuto Vega] is 10 for 10, so how are you going to know what that means until it happens?"

Five of the 13 runners will run for British yards, with John Gosden's Flemensfirth (10-1) and Singspiel (6-1), who won the world's second-richest race, the Japan Cup, for Michael Stoute last year, reckoned to stand the greatest chance of success. They drew stalls six and two respectively yesterday, while Helios is close to the rail. However, Richard Hills, the man who will be steering Even Top, is not unduly concerned.

"It all depends on how you



Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

Sprint from Siphon as he is put through his paces at Nad Al Sheba yesterday

ride this course," he said, and having enjoyed an extremely profitable winter on the dirt of Nad Al Sheba, he should know.

"There are long straights and long corners so there's plenty of time to move around."

A more important factor than the draw for all the European challengers will be their affinity, or otherwise, with Dubai's dirt track. Even Top has not

unduly concerned.

"With Juggler, from Australia also in the field, the second Dubai World Cup will include

Group One winners from four

continents, with total earnings of \$22m (£13.75m), while victory for the Japanese mare Hokuto Vega will push her past Cigar, the winner of the race 12 months ago, as the highest earner in the sport's history. Great quantities of honour and cash will be at stake on the Dubai dirt this Saturday, and British punters who still believe that the race is little more than a gimmick have just three days left to see sense.

Aintree ban riles McCoy

Tony McCoy's agent, Dave Roberts, yesterday called for a Jockey Club inquiry after the jockey was belatedly ruled out of the Grand National following a fall at Uttoxeter last Tuesday. McCoy was originally signed off for 10 days for concussion by the racecourse doctor, Andrew Toman. However,

RICHARD EDMONDSON, NAP: Greenback (Ascot 3/05), NB: Hale Derring (Ascot 4/10)

the Jockey Club's chief medical adviser, Dr Michael Turner, ruling the initial ban "inappropriate", increased it to 21 days. "Tony is upset that the decision took so long to be made," Roberts said, "and that he was informed at 10.30 at night. The doctor at the racecourse allowed Tony to drive home from Uttoxeter. If he was unconscious for three minutes this should never have been allowed."

Dr Turner said: "The racecourse doctor did not follow the Rules of Racing and handed Tony an inappropriate suspension, which had to be modified. I have merely imposed the Rules and rectified the error."

Balding fine is quashed

Tony Balding has succeeded in his appeal against a £1,000 fine for the running of Polden Pride at Exeter last Wednesday. A 30-day ban on the horse, who was found by the stewards to have not obtained the best possible placing in finishing second, was quashed by the Jockey Club Disciplinary Committee. Polden Pride's jockey, Barry Bentont, will have to serve a six-day suspension, reduced from eight days. Balding said: "The horse was at Exeter to do his best. The committee accepted that, and that the jockey misunderstood his instructions from me."

HYPERION'S
ASCOT

2.30: WHO IS EQUINAME blundered for the first time, has had much less racing than his main rivals, Exterior Profiles and Jaffers, and can show enough improvement to win this.

3.45: GREENBACK put in a solid performance to be third in a hot novice chase at Kempton last time and is marginally preferred in a race in which none of the five runners can be ruled out.

3.55: MISTER RNN was going well when falling at Cheltenham and, although even for this race with the tote, is still the best bet.

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FOLKESTONE 973 983
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DUBAI WORLD CUP 1st £1,428,571; 2nd £476,190; 3rd £208,095; 4th £119,042; 5th £71,429; 6th £47,619 1m 2f	
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3. 222222 HELIOS (Gold Dandy) M Murphy W P 59.0	J Brooks 3
4. 222223 FLEMENSFIRTH (Stable Malmstrom) M Stoute 59.0	J Hall 2
5. 115928 HORSE VEGA (Preston Park) L Mullen 57.1	R Hills 2
6. 47024 SIPHON (Preston Park) L Mullen 57.1	N Whittington 3
7. 402245 DUNLOP (P. Hovey and Partners) G Vassallo 56.0	R Hills 2
8. 1133-13 SIPHON (P. Hovey and Partners) L Mullen 57.0	R Hills 3
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sport

The enduring gifts of three wise men

Ahead of the Easter weekend biographical trilogy on BBC2, **Ken Jones** offers his own insight into the minds and methods of three outstanding football men, born within a stone's throw of one another in the west of Scotland and each destined for managerial greatness

Any serious attempt to chronicle the impact made on football in one era by Matt Busby, Bill Shankly and Jock Stein requires an understanding of the important influences that shaped them. Shankly's description of the marvellous teamwork central to Liverpool's success under his passionate management as "football socialism" and the bond he forged with the club's supporters were statements about working class values, that innate sense of fairness and mutual dependence familiar to all who were born into mining communities.

In the television trilogy *Arena: Busby, Shankly and Stein - The Football Men* that goes out on BBC2 over Easter weekend, Hugh McIlvanney sees them not merely as great figures in the game, men of wise and independent virtue, but as representatives of the people.

Even allowing for its prolific reputation in football (the area around Shankly's birthplace, Glenbank, sent out 50 professional players including 11 internationals), that three such notable managers should be born within a few miles of each other in the West of Scotland coalfield is in itself remarkable.

All three knew the hardships and perils of working underground, and with their young athlete's bodies, and the intelligence, and the courage and the drive that would lead to so many triumphs they learned what they wanted.

Stein would state that he never expected to come across better men than he worked with in the pits (sectarian differences had no currency at the coalface). If more at ease in football's upper circles, Busby too took strength from working class upbringing, strength that enabled him to overcome terrible injuries sustained in the Munich disaster and create another team. Shankly was never less than utterly true to his roots, carrying a deep suspicion of directors to



Bill Shankly (left), Matt Busby and Jock Stein (right): Not merely great figures in the game, men of wise and independent virtue, but representatives of the people

his grave. "The only song I knew by heart was the Red Flag," he once said.

If there is more than a hint of similar political affiliation in McIlvanney's narrative, and Frank Hanly's imaginative and sensitive direction, it ought not to trouble them. The truth about Busby, Shankly and Stein, one that affects me personally, is that they gave no evidence of backsliding. Upon being made a Freeman of Manchester, resplendent in formal attire, Busby began with the words: "I was born in a pitman's cottage." Shankly with his Cagney-esque poses and acute sense of imagery - "I'll visit London again when it's completed," he said in retirement - never lost sight of boyhood experiences.

Enthusiasm was all. "Players who don't dedicate themselves to the game and forget their duty to the supporters should be jailed," he snapped.

Unlike his two compatriots, both pre-World War Two internationals, Stein achieved no distinction as a player until Celtic recruited him from the Welsh non-League club Llanelli to a reserve centre-half. Selected for the first team in an emergency, he kept his place and led Celtic to victory in the Scottish Cup final.

It is Stein's return to Parkhead, after a successful apprenticeship in management with Dunfermline and Hibernian that brought him to the attention of clubs in England, that provides the most fascinating insights.

The music is emotive; the troubled 30s blues of Duke Ellington over stark images of life in the coalfields; a forgotten music hall artist, Bob Smith, singing the "Red Flag" with stirring clarity; the haunting "Fields of Athenry" emphasising the pernicious awfulness of immigrant life in the east Glasgow ghettos.

Stein's arrival back at the club he would transform into a major European force is attended by Dean Martin's version of "Return to me". It was not without pain. Only the fourth manager Celtic had ever appointed, the first non-Catholic, Stein had to suffer the resentment of fellow Protestants he had thought to be friends. Appalled by bigotry in all its forms, he took the

rejection in his stride. "They proved they weren't my friends," he said.

Considering that Stein had to overcome personal difficulties imposed by sectarianism and cut through the insularity of Scottish football, there is a case for concluding that he established a slight edge in management over Busby and Shankly and such redoubtable contemporaries as Alf Ramsey, Bill Nicholson and Don Revie.

Importantly, I think, all abided by a creed of mutual loyalty. From the beginning it was Busby's resolve to treat players in a way that players of his day were not treated. The most important thing about Shankly was that he could convey his enthusiasm to the players. None of them allowed

liberties to be taken, but what set Stein apart (he could be as fly as they come when dealing with problems in the dressing room and some thought him to be hit of a bully) was the understanding that football had to be set in a wider context.

Shankly and Liverpool were made for each other. The City was Glasgow with a different accent. "It was the place in football I was looking for," he said. "There was a great passion for the game." He tapped it to such great effect that his legacy has become a legend. Bob Paisley achieved great success in succession, winning the European Cup three times, a prize that eluded Shankly, but the foundations were laid long ago in Glenbank.

Celtic's 2-1 defeat of Internazionale to win the European Cup in 1967, the first success by a British club in the competition, brought Stein recognition throughout football. "John, you're immortal," Shankly said to him in the dressing room afterwards. Seeing again the devastating effect of Celtic's controlled surges on the archetypal defensive play, you can only marvel at the improvement Stein brought about in players who, by then, would have probably drifted into obscurity but for his presence among them.

A year later, Manchester United matched Celtic's distinction when overcoming Benfica on a night of great emotion at Wembley. For Busby it was, at least, the realisation of a vision lost in the wreckage of an airliner.

The differences that emerge from the careers of Busby, Shankly and Stein make it abundantly evident that there is no absolute method of managing a team. Busby himself would have claimed no great prowess as a tactician - "too much mind will destroy the game," he once said in a moment of exasperation - but none had keener eyes for a player or a clearer idea of blend.

In Shankly's mind, enthusiasm, honesty and togetherness were essential. "Every player who comes here is under scrutiny from the moment he arrives," he can be heard saying. "I know the colour of their eyes, every one of them." The tenets he laid down were simple but inviolable: don't let attackers turn and, if they do, track them down quickly. Never run the ball out of the penalty area and always support the man in possession. What Liverpool were then they are now. Shankly's mark is still on them.

Stein was a winner because he was smarter than most of his competition, because he was an unyielding perfectionist and because he imposed his will on his players with the sheer force of his personality. He made sure that he had some pretty good players, too.

There are managers who are disciplinarians and fitness fanatics and they are pale imitations of these three men. How they would have coped with today's circumstances, ever escalating salaries and the influence of agents is another story. Ian St John is convinced that Busby and Shankly colluded to keep matters in check after the removal of the maximum wage. "They didn't play a great deal of importance on money," he said.

Times change, maybe for the worse, maybe for the better, but this account of three tremendous careers in football reminds us that no amount of corporate development can obliterate the game's working class history.

Arena: Busby, Shankly and Stein, the Football Men starts Friday 9.30pm BBC2.

West Ham favourites for signature of Lomas

ALAN NIXON

Manchester City's Steve Lomas looks set to sign for West Ham in a shock £2.5m transfer deadline deal. Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, agreed a price for the Northern Ireland midfielder with City's Frank Clark yesterday.

Redknapp wants to strengthen his team despite the Hammers' recent upturn in results and has money to invest on the hard-working Lomas.

Coventry's manager, Gordon Strachan, still hopes to persuade Lomas to join his struggling side but West Ham are the firm favourites to sign Lomas, who was not offered a new contract at City.

Blackburn's caretaker manager, Tony Parkes, has been assured that his future at Ewood Park is safe. Roy Hodgson, who is due to take over at Blackburn in the summer, has dismissed reports that he intends to bring in his own backroom staff.

Parkes, who has presided over a revival in Rovers' fortunes, said: "Roy was very concerned by the stories and called me. He has made his feelings

clear and there's no problem as far as I am concerned."

There had been reports that Bob Houghton, a colleague of Hodgson's in his days at Bristol City and Malmö, and Mike Kelly, a former England goalkeeping coach, were being lined up for jobs at Ewood Park.

Bristol City's chairman, Steve Davidson, wants to waste no time in appointing a replacement for Joe Jordan, who left the 10th-placed Second Division club by mutual consent on Monday. Davidson said he had already received a number of applications. John Ward, the former Bristol Rovers manager, and Bournemouth's general manager, Mel Machin, have been linked with the vacancy.

Alex Ferguson has dismissed reports in foreign newspapers that he is interested in signing either Barcelona's Brazilian striker, Ronaldo, or Sean Dundee, the Karlsruhe striker.

Ronaldo was reported in the Spanish press to be considering offers from United, Milan and Paris Saint-Germain. The South African-born Dundee, now eligible for Germany, was said to have been watched by Ferguson during his club's 2-0 defeat by Bayern Munich on Sunday.

The Celtic striker Jorge Cadete is to be investigated by the disciplinary committee of the Scottish FA for throwing his shirt to fans. Cadete stripped off his Celtic shirt and threw it into the crowd at the end of the 2-2 draw with Dunfermline.

Supporters at Scottish League matches are being encouraged to report misbehaving fans in a Scottish Football Association initiative to stamp out crowd trouble.

After a meeting between club representatives hosted by the SFA at Stirling's Forthbank Stadium, it was decided to target fans who spit or throw missiles.

TODAY'S NUMBER

45

The number of years in jail that the boxing promoter Don King faces if he is found guilty at re-trial in New York of insurance fraud. King also faces a fine of \$2.25m (£1.4m). The original jury was unable to reach a verdict.

Wales do without Crossley

Mark Crossley, the Nottingham Forest goalkeeper, has pulled out of the Wales squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Belgium because of a back injury.

Crossley managed to play in Forest's 1-1 draw against Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium on Monday night, but he is suffering from a slipped disc which is preventing him from training in between matches and has told Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, that he will not be joining up with the squad.

Crossley intends to nurse himself through relegation-threatened Forest's remaining five league games before having treatment for the injury.

"I'm gutted about it but I've had to drop out of the Wales squad," said Crossley, who made an impressive international debut in last month's friendly against the Republic of Ireland. "I've spoken to Bob and he knows what the situation is."

Gould, anticipating Crossley's problems, included four goalkeepers in his original squad in Neville Southall, Crossley, Andy Marriott and Paul Jones, and he is also hoping that Mark Hughes will recover from a groin strain in time to face the Germans.

Hughes appeared as a second-half substitute in Chelsea's 1-0 defeat at Middlesbrough at the weekend despite his injury, but will delay joining the squad.

"Mark is staying at Chelsea for treatment for the next couple of days, but I'm still hopeful that he'll be fit for Saturday," Gould added. He has called up the Huddersfield Town defender Marcus Browning in case Hughes has to drop out.

Belgium could be without the Newcastle centre-back Philippe Albert, who suffered a knee injury during Sunday's 1-1 with Wimbledon.

Arsenal's Patrick Vieira and Franck Leboeuf of Chelsea were both named in France's provisional squad of 37 for next year's World Cup, but there was still no place for Eric Cantona or David Ginola.

From the list, Aimé Jacquet will pick a reduced squad of 18 for the friendly international against Sweden at Parc des Princes next Wednesday.

Middlesbrough Football Club will today have the leading QC George Carmen appearing on their behalf at their appeal before a Football Association Commission against the deduction of three points for their refusal to play at Blackburn earlier this season.

No-one who had seen Mr Carmen in action would doubt the wisdom of seeking his assistance. Nonetheless, his presence will raise for many the unwelcome spectre of increased intervention in sporting matters by lawyers and the courts.

This legal intervention can take many forms. In 1995, Duncan Ferguson was fined £10,000 by the Court of Appeal for a serious back injury caused to a player when a scrum collapsed. The decision was confirmed by the Court of Appeal.

Players are not the only ones subject to damages claims. In a case which received widespread publicity last year, a referee of a colts rugby match was held liable for a serious back injury caused to a player when a scrum collapsed. The decision was confirmed by the Court of Appeal.

However, the judge was at pains to indicate the exceptional circumstances of the case - in particular that it was a colts game and the fact that the rules of rugby were modified for such games, which was significant in giving rise to liability in this case. Interestingly, the plaintiff had also sued the opposing tight-head prop, but the judge held that there was no evidence that the prop did anything deliberate to bring down the scrum and so the claim against him failed.

Perhaps the most significant

Middlesbrough's latest big money signing is a lawyer. It is symbolic of a growing trend, argues Dan Tench, an expert on sport and the law

player suffering a double fracture of the leg. Such actions are not always successful.

In 1994 Chester's Paul Elliott lost when he sued Liverpool's Dean Saunders after a tackle which ended Elliott's career. The judge decided that the restrictions on the free movement of players at the end of their contracts and the limit of three foreign players at each club were contrary to the laws of the European Union. The full ramifications of the decision are still not known (the changes regarding freedom of movement may be largely avoided by means of longer contracts) but a greater influx of overseas players into the English league has already taken place.

In effect the Bismarck verdict decided the rules by which football governed itself could not apply, and for many sports bodies the biggest cause of concern is when their final authority is questioned in the courts. This is the threat that hangs over today's appeal. Carmen is certain to point out that, under the Premier League's Rule 19, a club failing to fulfil its fixtures shall only pay compensation to the opposing club.

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intervention by the courts into the sporting arena was the Bosman decision of the European Court of Justice. The Court decided that the restrictions on the free movement of players at the end of their contracts and the limit of three foreign players at each club were contrary to the laws of the European Union. The full ramifications of the decision are still not known (the changes regarding freedom of movement may be largely avoided by means of longer contracts) but a greater influx of overseas players into the English league has already taken place.

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Bjorkman halts the 'Phili Flyer'

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Key Biscayne

The "Phili Flyer" continues to make good time without necessarily reaching the desired destination. Mark Philippoussis's mega-serve could not secure a place for him in the quarter-finals of the Lipton Championships here yesterday, although a twisted ankle in the opening game did not help the young Australian's cause against Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman, who defeated him 6-3, 6-4.

Generally outplayed by Bjorkman on the day, the 20-year-old Philippoussis will have to work harder on his ground-strokes. His opponents, meanwhile, will dread the time when the rest of his game synchronises with his bazooka serve.

Philippoussis registered serves of 140mph and 141mph, during his third-round match against Wayne Ferreira on Sunday, and the Australian set an ATP Tour record of 142mph against Byron Black on 7 March.

So Philippoussis is now three speeds higher than his nearest rival, Britain's Greg Rusedski, the previous record holder with the 139.5mph serve in Beijing last year.

As if his 6ft 4in frame were not enough of an advantage, Philippoussis uses a long-body racket of the type favoured by rather smaller players such as Michael Chang, Thomas Muster, Todd Woodbridge, and the precocious Martina Hingis.

The rackets come in two sizes, 29 inches and 32 inches from the top of the frame to the bottom of the handle (standard rackets are 27 inches). The International Tennis Federation

has taken steps to restrict rackets to 29 inches by the year 2000.

But where will the high-serving be then? "Hopefully it's not going to end," Philippoussis said. "I'm going to keep on trying to serve harder and harder."

Chang expects no relief from the challenge of attempting to return more of the same. "I think guys can hit harder for sure," he said, having consistently improved his own serve (his fastest is 130mph) to add a dimension to his counter-punching style and mental strength.

"For one thing, Mark knows if we're to string his tension a little looser he'd be able to hit harder. The flipside of the coin, if he does that, is that he's not going to have any control to his serve," he said.

"I think if you had a serving contest – just strictly serve, so guys don't have to worry about hitting volleys or groundstrokes – they'd string their tension a lot looser and they'd be able to get a lot higher than that for sure."

Philippoussis recently participated in an experiment by *Tennis* magazine, which revealed that there is only an average difference of 4mph between a wooden racket and an oversized, extended synthetic racket.

"Obviously it's got a lot to do with technique," Philippoussis said. "Body weight into the serve is important. There's also technique and the rhythm of the serve. I've had a few serves with each racket. Obviously you can still hit a hard serve with a wooden racket. Obviously, you can't get the same consistency as with the other rackets. But you can certainly still crank it up."

So the record is at risk? "To tell you the truth, I felt I could have broken it on Sunday if I had had the new balls when there was a bit of wind down on one end of the court," he said. ■ Greg Rusedski yesterday urged Tim Henman to decide for himself if he will play in Britain's Davis Cup tie with Zimbabwe next week.

Henman is struggling with an elbow injury, which is a problem he has had for a number of years and the British No 1 knows that the only cure for the problem is a lengthy period of rest from his hectic schedule.

But with the vital Davis Cup tie at Crystal Palace looming, Henman is under pressure to play. David Lloyd, the Davis Cup captain, has made it clear he wants the world No 16 to be in his side along with Rusedski, although Henman's coach, David Felgate, is keen for his charge to rest and avoid any further damage which could jeopardise his future prospects.

Rusedski, who is himself carrying a wrist injury, said: "I do have sympathy for Tim. He will have to listen to his doctor's advice and whatever the doctor thinks is right he will have to do. Only Tim knows how the injury is and he has to make the decision."

The loss of Henman and Rusedski would be a major blow to Britain's chances of victory in the tie, which they must win to stand a chance of qualifying for the World Group which consists of the top 16 nations.

However, Rusedski is optimistic that his wrist, which he injured during the final of a tournament in San Jose last month, is responding well enough to treatment to enable him to play.

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Pick of the pride
Chris Hewett on the Lions for South Africa, page 28

sport

Three wise men
Ken Jones on Busby, Stein and Shankly, page 30

Hoddle stays calm through injury time

GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

 Given the daily medical bulletins being issued from Team England, it was no surprise to see a M*A*S*H-style tent erected at the corner of the training field at Bisham Abbey yesterday. With red markings on its white fabric, it looked just like a field hospital and one expected to see Hot Lips or Hawkeye to come rushing out to meet a laden helicopter at any moment.

Instead, there was Glenn Hoddle doing his impression of Major Burns as he counted the casualties in his dwindling England squad and insisting nothing was amiss.

The England coach was reduced to putting on a training session for just six outfield players yesterday, which tested even his expertise. This was partly because the survivors of Monday night's Highbury encounter were allowed to rest, but also because, of his original 25-man squad, five never turned up and eight others are carrying injuries.

The upshot was a SOS for reinforcements, with Stan Collymore, who could not even get into the Liverpool team a week ago, leading the way. Hoddle saw him at Highbury and said: "He has impressed me recently. In Europe last week and at Arsenal, the appetite was there, the talent has always been there. Had he been match-sharp he could have had three at Highbury, but at least he was in there getting chances." Collymore,



No legs eleven: Because of injuries and fatigue, Glenn Hoddle was forced to take a training session for just six players at Bisham Abbey yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

injuries to release players who were carrying injuries. However, the Premiership programme had to be cancelled because of matches elsewhere and it is a chance for Hoddle to see other players and debrief the survivors from the Italy game – one reason why he has insisted the likes of Le Tissier come.

who disappointed in winning two caps in 1995, said: "I'm delighted. You can't judge someone on just a couple of games."

Phil Neville has also been summoned along with Stuart Pearce, while David May was called up on Sunday. With Saturday's match against Mexico only being a friendly, Hoddle

originally left Pearce out so the Nottingham Forest caretaker manager could concentrate on club matters – this is transfer deadline week. However, he rang Pearce yesterday and asked him to Bisham on the understanding he would play.

Of the injured, Gary Neville, Tony Adams and Gareth Southgate (all ankle), are most doubtful. Matt Le Tissier will be assessed once Saturday's injection in his foot has taken full effect.

"He is very sore and tender, so we won't know how he is until Thursday," Hoddle said.

Graceman Souness, Le Tissier's club manager, is unhappy with the call-up, and said: "I don't

want Matt written off for the season like Paul Gascoigne was after training with England."

An aggrieved Hoddle responded: "Graeme was not here when Gazza was. If he wants to phone me and ask what was done, he can. The injured players will be well treated here. They may receive differ-

ent treatment from at their clubs – the guys working here are at the very top."

Hoddle also rejected suggestions that it was a mistake to arrange the match. "My first four games were World Cup qualifiers and this is the first chance I have had to experiment. It is common sense to take it. At this stage of

next season, I will probably set

aside for a training camp." However, he admitted: "If I had had a crystal ball six months ago and knew how many players would be injured, I may have just done that anyway."

It should have been obvious that with the season reaching a climax, managers would be re-

Unavailable through injury when squad was picked



Fit members of the squad: *James, *Redknapp, *Fowler, *Keown, *Wright, Butt, Flowers, Martyn, Lee, Le Saux, Batty, Ince (12). * did not train yesterday having played Monday. Called up: Pearce, Collymore, P. Neville, May.

Selected but never arrived at Bisham because of injury

Arrived at Bisham but yet to train because of injury and doubtful for Saturday's match

'I wish to congratulate you for your act of sportsmanship'

GLENN MOORE

Less than a week after incurring the displeasure of Uefa, football's European governing body, for supporting the sacked Liverpool dockers, Robbie Fowler was yesterday canonised by Fifa for his sportsmanship.

Sepp Blatter, the executive secretary of the game's world governing body, thanked Fowler by fax for "helping maintain the integrity of the game".

Fowler himself was keeping quiet yesterday, which may have been a good idea given the bizarre nature of some of the tributes. One tabloid newspaper tried to present him with an old and unprinted cup for being the sportsman of the decade.

Television pictures suggested Fowler had told Gerald Asby that he had fallen after the referee had awarded a penalty following his tumble over David Seaman at Highbury on Monday night.

"Robbie felt he need to point out that Seaman hadn't touched him," Stan Collymore, his Liverpool strike partner, said yesterday. "A lot of players would have just left it at the referee's whistle."

"I can't say what the team's reaction would have been if [the penalty had been revoked] and the game had ended 1-1." David James, the Liverpool goalkeeper, said: "Different people in the squad would react in different ways. More generally

I am not in favour of bringing in television for those decisions."

The human element is one of the reasons people like football." Both players had initially thought Fowler was trying to save Seaman from being sent off.

Blatter had no doubt. His fax read: "I wish to congratulate you for the act of sportsmanship which you demonstrated. Visibly trying to persuade the referee from awarding a penalty in your favour did you great honour. It is the kind of gesture

which helps maintain the integrity of the game."

"At a time when there is a disturbing trend towards cheating, and when Fifa is appealing to players (especially in the professional game) to help referees rather than deceive them,

your example at this vital moment in such an important match should set an example to younger players and fellow professionals alike. Thank you for helping Fifa in its efforts for the good of the game."

Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the players' union, the PFA, said: "I'd like any youngster coming into the game to use him as a role model for what he did. Not only was he clearly admitting he did not deserve a penalty, but also showing his concern as a fellow professional might be sent off. I know Robbie has a reputation for being a little bit of a scallywag on occasions, but nobody could fault him here."

The beaten manager was just as generous about Fowler, but

not about Asby. "It was a great gesture by Fowler and I would like to give him an award for fair play," said Arsene Wenger, who then added: "But if he got that, I would also have to give the referee an award for stupidity."

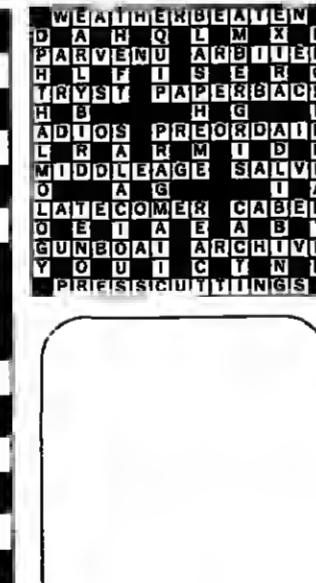
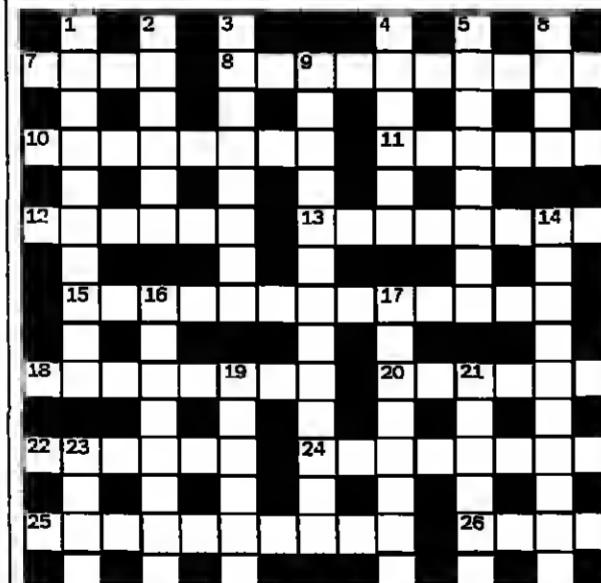
Steven Lodge, the FA Cup final referee, said: "The first time I saw it I thought it was a harsh decision. Then I saw it again and thought he did it in an England shirt. It was an honest reaction – you could argue it was professional," he said.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3256. Wednesday 26 March

By Agatha

Monday's Solution



ACROSS
7 Cry of pain? It's the old disc! (4)
8 Price so steep, so argue out a settlement! (10)
10 Lines on style from Don Juan, for example (4-4)
11 Makes small amount of progress in Winchester (6)
12 Practise fighting with soldiers in tough old state (6)
13 Fresh catch of herring at one old penny? That was novel in Victorian times (8)
15 High tars used to bring people round (8-5)
18 Rustling, we hear, in France? (8)
20 Caddis, later on? (6)
22 Night bird in garden got out (6)
24 Canute was so unlucky, making tide fall (3-5)

DOWN
1 Bliss, say, holding up a pair of scales? Naturally, one breaks up! (10)
2 Come up with a paper that is extraordinary (6)
3 Bird after new moon is one-track (8)
4 A paint spread to produce surface-sheen (6)
5 Clement almost stocked following wicked crime (8)
6 Expected to clutch penny in this truck? (4)
9 Taking many minutes when sectioning Mum, gone crazy (4-9)
14 Eric, senile, surprisingly showing tendency to recover (10)

Middlesbrough call on Carman

BILL PIERCE

Middlesbrough will ask the Football Association today to give them back the three points the Premier League deducted after they called off their fixture at Blackburn in December at 24 hours' notice.

Boro will have their appeal, to be heard at a Heathrow hotel by a three-man FA commission, on a claim that the League has no powers to inflict such a penalty, which was also accompanied by a £50,000 fine and an order to pay Blackburn's costs for staging the fixture.

The Premier League, however, is convinced it can prove that it was legally correct to deduct the points.

Boro's case will be enhanced by the distinguished barrister George Carman, who will present their appeal. The 67-year-old QC has scored a notable series of successes in the High

Court, such as defending Imran Khan against a libel action brought by Ian Botham and Allan Lamb last year.

Carman is expected to present a formidable challenge for the Premier League's own legal representative, Anthony Grabiner QC.

The Middlesbrough manager, Bryan Robson, who had to call off the match at Blackburn on 21 December because he had 24 players injured or ill, is "hopeful" his club will win their appeal. The commission has the power to adjust the punishment, cancel it completely or even increase it.

Robson said: "We just hope

that people will see common sense and understand the predicament we were in at that time." Middlesbrough looked certainties for relegation when the three points were deducted in January but since have hit a rich vein of form to climb clear of the bottom three.

Blackburn will have their own legal representatives present at the appeal and may even submit that the three points Middlesbrough lost should be awarded to them.

The Premier League's spokesman Mike Lee said: "It would be inappropriate for us to comment at this stage but obviously we believe the original decision was a correct one."

It is clear that the Blackburn Middlesbrough game will be rearranged, and another option for the appeal board is to order that Boro play it with only the players they claimed were available on 21 December.

The Premier League's rule 19 states that no club shall, without just cause, fail to fulfil its fixture obligations in respect of any League match on the appointed date or dates. The club failing... shall pay compensation to the opposing club.

Sport threatened by court action, page 30

Brive to contest Lamaison ban

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWETT

It is becoming the most talked about shoulder charge since JPR Williams secured a Grand Slam for Wales by barging Jean-François Gourdon into the Arms Park advertising hoardings back in 1976. Christophe Lamaison's assault on Craig Chalmers 12 days ago landed the victim in hospital, the perpetrator in hot water and now looks like landing the lawyers a bumper pay day.

The French reacted furiously yesterday to the 30-day ban imposed on Lamaison, the goal-kicking centre from Brive, by a Five Nations disciplinary tribunal. Officials of Brive, the European champions, went straight for the jugular by threatening court action.

"We will be talking to the French Federation and our lawyers," Laurent Seigne, the Brive coach, said. "Rugby is a professional sport now and we have to consider if this suspension does not constitute restraint of trade."

Seigne was supported by his president, Patrick Sébastien, who said: "Surely this ban should be limited to international rugby."

Ironically, Lamaison will be available for his country's next international, against Romania on 1 June. His suspension rebounds purely on Brive, who must do without their most dependable source of points for four crucial domestic championship matches.

The board of the European

Rugby Cup are meeting in Dublin today to present the accounts of this season's wildly successful Heineken Cup. Rumours of French and English discontent over both the financial handling of the tournament and its long-term future were dismissed yesterday by Roger Pickering, the ERC director, who denied the existence of any move by the Welsh, Scots and Irish to expand the competition into a season-long league. Fears of an Anglo-French breakaway receded when Michel Pâme, one of the French delegates, said he would be offering his full support to next season's 20-team format.

In South Africa, massive public interest in the first match of this summer's Lions tour in Port Elizabeth has forced the organisers to abandon plans to host it at a township ground just outside the city. The game with an Eastern Province invitation XV will now take place at the Boet Erasmus Stadium, a 35,000-seater test venue, on 24 May.

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And a beer to go with it.

Bass REST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777